TAFSEER AS-SA'DI

Juz' 1-3

تفسير السعدي

تيسير الكريم الرحمن في تفسير كلام المنان

'Abdur-Rahmân Nâsir as-Sa'di

IIPH الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي



IN THE NAME OF

ALLAH

THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL



VOLUME 1

TAFSEER AS-SA'DI

JUZ' 1-3

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- Title: *Tafseer as-Sa'di* Vol. 1 (Juz' 1-3)
- Author: Abdur-Rahmân Nâsir as-Sa'di
- English Edition 1 (2018)
- Translator: Nasiruddin al-Khattab
- Edited by: Huda Khattab
- Layout Design: IIPH
- Cover Design: Samo Press Group, Beirut

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VOLUME 1

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JUZ' 1-3

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(تيسير الكريم الرحمن في تفسير القرآن)

جزء ١-٣

Abdur-Rahmân Nâsir as-Sa'di

Translated by
Nasiruddin al-Khattab

Edited by
Huda Khattab

IIPH
الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي
International Islamic Publishing House

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Copyright © 2018 International Islamic Publishing House
King Fahd National Library Cataloging-in-Publication Data

as-Sa'di, Abdur-Rahmân Nâsir

***Tafseer as-Sa'di* Vol. 1 (Juz' 1-3)** / Abdur-Rahmân Nâsir as-Sa'di; Nasiruddin al-Khattab — Riyadh, 2018
10 volumes

480 pp ; 21 cm

1- Qur'an - Interpretations I- Nasiruddin al-Khattab (translator) II- Title

227.6 dc

Legal Deposit no. 1439/3410
ISBN Hardcover: 978-603-501-359-8 (set)
978-603-501-360-4 (Vol. 1)

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International Islamic Publishing House (IIPH)
P.O. Box 55195 Riyadh 11534, Saudi Arabia
E-mail: editorial@iiph.com — iiphsa@gmail.com
www.iiph.com

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Pronunciation and Transliteration Chart

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Trans-literated form
أ	short 'a', as in *cat*	a
آ — ى	longer 'a', as in *cab* (not as in *cake*)	â
ب	/b/ as in *bell*, *rubber* and *tab*	b
ت	/t/ as in *tap*, *mustard* and *sit*	t
ة	takes the sound of the preceding diacritical mark sometimes ending in h (when in pausal form): ah, ih or ooh; or atu(n), ati(n) or ata(n) when uninterrupted	h or t (when followed by another Arabic word)
ث	/th/ as in *thing*, *maths* and *wealth*	th
ج	/j/ as in *jam*, *ajar* and *age*	j
ح	a 'harsher' sound than the English initial /h/, and may occur medially and in word-final position as well	ḥ
خ	as in *Bach* (in German); may occur initially and medially as well	kh
د	/d/ as in *do*, *muddy* and *red*	d
ذ	as in *this*, *father* and *smooth*	dh

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Arabic script	Pronunciation	Trans-literated form
ر	/r/ as in *raw*, *arid* and *war*; may also be a rolled 'r', as pronounced in Spanish	r
ز	/z/ as in *zoo*, *easy* and *gaze*	z
س	/s/ as in *so*, *messy* and *grass*	s
ش	as in *ship*, *ashes* and *rush*	sh
ص	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /sw/ or /s/ farther back in the mouth	ṣ
ض	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /d/ farther back in the mouth	ḍ
ط	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /t/ farther back in the mouth	ṭ
ظ	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing 'the' farther back in the mouth	dh
ع	no close equivalent in English: a guttural sound in the back of the throat	'
غ	no close equivalent in English, but may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like the French /r/ in 'rouge'	gh
ف	/f/ as in *fill*, *effort* and *muff*	f

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Arabic script	Pronunciation	Trans-literated form
ق	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /k/ farther back in the mouth	q
ك	/k/ as in *king*, *buckle* and *tack*	k
ل	/l/ as in *lap*, *halo*; in the word Allah, it becomes velarized as in *ball*	l
م	/m/ as in *men*, *simple* and *ram*	m
ن	/n/ as in *net*, *ant* and *can*	n
ه – ـه – ـه	/h/ as in *hat*; unlike /h/ in English, in Arabic /h/ is pronounced in medial and word-final positions as well	h
و	as in *wet* and *away*	w
و	long 'u', as in *boot* and *too*	oo
ي	as in *yard* and *mayo*	y
ي	long 'e', as in *eat*, *beef* and *see*	ee
ء	glottal stop: may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like 't' in the Cockney English pronunciation of *butter*: *bu'er*, or the stop sound in *uh-oh!*	(omitted in initial position)

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Diphthongs

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Trans-literated form
أو، ـَو	long 'o', as in *owe*, *boat* and *go*	au, aw
أي، ـَي	long 'a', as in *aid*, *rain* and *say*	ay, ai, ei

Diacritical marks (tashkeel)

Name of mark	Pronunciation	Trans-literated form
◌َ fatḥah	very short 'a' or schwa (unstressed vowel)	a
◌ِ kasrah	shorter version of ee or schwa (unstressed vowel)	i
◌ُ ḍammah	shorter version of oo	u
◌ّ shaddah	a doubled consonant is stressed in the word, and the length of the sound is also doubled	double letter
◌ْ sukoon	no vowel sound between consonants or at the end of a word	absence of vowel

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Arabic honorific symbols

(ﷻ)	*Subḥânahu wa Ta'âlâ*	The Exalted
(ﷺ)	*ṣalla Allâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*	Blessings and peace be upon him
(عليه السلام)	*'alayhi as-salâm*	May peace be upon him
(رضي الله عنه)	*raḍiya Allâhu 'anhu*	May Allah be pleased with him
(رضي الله عنها)	*raḍiya Allâhu 'anhâ*	May Allah be pleased with her
(رضي الله عنهما)	*raḍiya Allâhu 'anhumâ*	May Allah be pleased with both of them
(رضي الله عنهم)	*raḍiya Allâhu 'anhum*	May Allah be pleased with all of them
(رضي الله عنهن)	*raḍiya Allâhu 'anhunna*	May Allah be pleased with all of them (females only)

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Hadith grade terms

Sound:	*ṣaḥeeḥ*
Reliable:	*ḥasan*
Weak:	*ḍa'eef*
Odd:	*ghareeb*
Authentic:	includes sound, reliable, or any grade in between
Acceptable:	*sakat 'anhu;* the grader of the hadith did not comment on it, meaning that he found nothing unacceptable in it

About the Word '*Lord*'



The word lord in English has several related meanings. The original meaning is 'master' or 'ruler', and in this sense it is often used to refer to human beings: 'the lord of the mansion' or 'Lord So-and-So' (in the United Kingdom, for example). The word *Lord* with a capital L is used in the lexicon of Islam to refer to the One and Only God — Allah. In Islam, there is no ambiguity about the meaning of this word. While it is true that one may occasionally use the word *lord* (whether capitalized or not) to refer to a human being, in Islamic discourse the reference of this term is always clear from the context. Whereas for Christians, Hindus and other polytheists, the word *Lord* with a capital L may refer to Allah, to Jesus or to some imagined deity, for Muslims, there can be no plurality of meaning. Allah alone is the Lord, and the Lord is Allah — not Jesus, not Rama, not any other being.

The Editor



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Publisher's Note

All praise and thanks belong to Allah alone, the One, the Almighty, and All-Merciful. Blessings and peace be upon Prophet Muhammad, the last of His messengers and prophets, and upon his family, his Companions, and all those who follow in his footsteps until the end of time.

It is quite disheartening that even though many Muslims today recite the Qur'an regularly, its application in their daily lives is almost non-existent. It all comes down to the fact that the Qur'an needs to be read with translation and explanation so that the context of each verse becomes clear as well as the different ways it applies to one's daily routine.

This comprehensive ten-volume exegesis of the Qur'an, beautifully penned by Imam Abdur-Rahmân Nâsir as-Sa'di and translated by Nasiruddin al-Khattab, attempts to do just that: make the meanings and explanation of the Qur'an easy to understand for the English-language readers and give them take-home lessons from the incidents mentioned in it. May Allah accept the efforts of all those who contributed to the production of this book, and may it be acceptable to Him, *âmeen*.

Muhammad Abdul Mohsin al-Tuwaijri
Managing Director
International Islamic Publishing House
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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01.
Soorat al-Fâtiḥah

(Makki)[1]

In the name of Allah,
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿١﴾ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢﴾
الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٣﴾ مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٤﴾ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ
﴿٥﴾ اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٦﴾ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٧﴾﴾ (سورة الفاتحة: ١-٧)

1:1. In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.[2]

1:2. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds,

1:3. The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,

1:4. Master of the Day of Judgement.

1:5. You [alone] we worship, and You [alone] we ask for help;

---

[1] In as-Sa'di's original work, these notes are mentioned with some chapters, but not mentioned with all 114 chapters. (Editor)

[2] The meanings of the verses of the Qur'an in this book (with some minor changes to the punctuation) have been translated by the translator. (Editor)

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1:6. Guide us to the straight path,

1:7. The path of those whom You have blessed; not of those who have incurred Your wrath, nor of those who have gone astray.

﴿In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful﴾ that is, I begin with every name of Allah (*Subḥânahu wa Ta'âlâ* – Glorified and Exalted is He); this includes all the (beautiful) names of Allah.

﴿Allah﴾ – He is the One Who is worshipped, the only One Who deserves to be worshipped, because of the divine attributes He has, which are attributes of perfection.

﴿the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful﴾. These two names indicate that He possesses great mercy that encompasses all things and includes all living beings, and He has decreed it for the pious, the followers of His Prophets and Messengers. Absolute mercy is for them; others have a share of it.

It should be noted that one of the basic principles on which the early generations of the Ummah and its leading scholars are agreed is belief in the names and attributes of Allah and how those attributes are manifested. For example, they believe that He is Most Gracious, Most Merciful; He possesses mercy that is one of His attributes and this mercy has an impact on His creation. So all types of blessings are signs of His mercy. The same applies to all of His names. We may say concerning the All-Knowing that He has (unlimited) knowledge, by means of which He knows all things. Similarly, the All-Powerful is possessed of might and has power over all things.

﴿Praise be to Allah﴾. This refers to praising Allah for the attributes of perfection and for His actions that are based on generosity and justice. So to Him be perfect praise in all ways.

﴿the Lord of the worlds﴾. The Lord is the One Who sustains all creatures – which refers to all beings other than Allah – because He

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created them, granted them everything that they need and bestowed great blessings upon them; if they were deprived of those blessings they would not be able to survive, for whatever blessings they enjoy come from Him.

He sustains His creation in two ways, general and specific.

In general terms, this refers to His creation of all creatures, His granting of provision to them and His guiding them to that which is in their best interests, which enables them to survive in this world.

In specific terms, it refers to His cherishing of His close friends, by means of instilling faith in their hearts, guiding them to it, perfecting it for them and warding off from them distractions and obstacles that come between them and faith. In real terms, this means guiding them to everything that is good and protecting them from everything that is bad. Perhaps it is for this reason that most of the supplications of the Prophets used the word Lord (*Rabb*),[3] since all their requests and needs came under His special cherishing.

The phrase ﴿the Lord of the worlds﴾ indicates that He alone has the power to create, and He alone controls His creation, bestows blessings and is completely independent of means, whilst all of creation is dependent upon Him in all respects.

﴿Master of the Day of Judgement﴾ The Master (*Mâlik*) is the one who possesses the attributes of sovereignty, one of the implications of which is that He enjoins and forbids, rewards and punishes, and controls His subjects in all ways. This sovereignty is connected to the Day of Judgement, which is the Day of Resurrection, the day on which people will be judged on the basis of their deeds, both good and bad. On that day, His perfect sovereignty, justice and wisdom

[3] Wherever possible, Arabic terms have been translated into English. In cases where we have chosen to retain the Arabic, the transliterated word or phrase is shown in italics the first time it appears in the text. The term is also defined in the glossary found at the end of this book. (Editor)

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will become completely clear to His creation, and they will realise that created beings have no sovereignty at all. On that day, kings and subjects, slaves and free, will all be equal and will submit fully to His might, awaiting the reckoning, hoping for His reward and fearing His punishment. Hence this day is singled out for mention; otherwise, He is the Master of the Day of Judgement and of all other days.

﴿You [alone] we worship, and You [alone] we ask for help﴾ that is, we single out You alone to worship and ask for help. Putting the object at the beginning of the sentence conveys the meaning of exclusivity. In other words: we worship You, and we do not worship anyone other than You; we ask You for help and we do not ask anyone other than You for help.

Worship is mentioned before seeking help by way of mentioning what is general before what is specific, and also to give precedence to Allah's dues over those of His slaves.

"Worship" (*'ibâdah*) refers to everything that Allah loves and is pleased with of actions and words, both outward and inward. "Seeking help" refers to relying upon Allah (ﷻ) when seeking to attain what is beneficial and ward off what is harmful, whilst trusting that one will attain that.

Worshipping Allah and seeking His help is the means of attaining eternal happiness and salvation from all evils; there is no other way of attaining salvation apart from doing these two things. True worship can only be that which is learned from the Messenger of Allah (*ṣalla Allâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* – blessings and peace be upon him) and done with the intention of seeking the pleasure of Allah. If it includes these two things, then it is worship. Seeking help is mentioned after worship, even though it is a part of worship, because in offering all types of worship the individual needs the help of Allah (ﷻ); if Allah does not help him, he will not attain what he wants to of fulfilling commands and heeding prohibitions.

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﴿Guide us to the straight path﴾ that is, show us and help us to follow the straight path, which is the clear path that leads to Allah and to His paradise, which in turn means knowing the truth and acting upon it. (This is a prayer) for guidance to the straight path and guidance when following the path. Guidance to the straight path means adhering to the religion of Islam and forsaking all other religions; guidance when following the path includes guidance concerning all the details of religion, in knowledge and action. This supplication is one of the most concise, comprehensive and beneficial of supplications. Hence it is obligatory to call upon Allah with it in every *rak'ah* of the prayer, because we are in need of that.

This straight path is ﴿The path of those whom You have blessed﴾, namely the Prophets, *ṣiddeeqeen* (strong and true in faith), martyrs and righteous people.

﴿not﴾ the path ﴿of those who have incurred Your wrath﴾ those who came to know the truth but drifted away from it, such as the Jews and others like them; and not the path ﴿of those who have gone astray﴾, those who drifted away from the truth because of ignorance and misguidance, such as the Christians and others like them.

Although this *soorah* is brief, it contains that which no other soorah of the Qur'an contains. It refers to the three types of *tawḥeed* (affirmation of the oneness of Allah). *Tawḥeed ar-ruboobiyah* (affirmation of the oneness of the divine Lordship) is seen in the verse ﴿the Lord of the worlds﴾. *Tawḥeed al-uloohiyah* (affirmation of the oneness of divinity), which refers to worshipping Allah alone, is seen in the phrases ﴿Praise be to Allah﴾ and ﴿You [alone] we worship﴾. *Tawḥeed al-asmâ' waṣ-ṣifât* (affirmation of the oneness of the divine names and attributes), which means affirming that the attributes of perfection belong to Allah (ﷻ) alone, which He ascribed to Himself and which His Messenger (ﷺ) affirmed, without denying

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the apparent meanings or likening Him to His creation, is seen in the word ﴿Praise﴾, as discussed above.

It affirms prophethood in the words ﴿Guide us to the straight path﴾, because that guidance is not possible without sending Messengers.

It affirms recompense for deeds in the words ﴿Master of the Day of Judgement﴾, and tells us that the recompense will be on the basis of justice, because this is the meaning of the word judgement.

It affirms the divine decree, and tells us that humans act on the basis of free will, which is contrary to the views of the Qadaris[4] and Jabaris.[5] In fact, it refutes all the followers of innovation [and misguidance] in the verse ﴿Guide us to the straight path﴾ because the straight path is knowing the truth and acting upon it, but everyone who follows innovation [and misguidance] does the opposite of that.

It speaks of being sincere towards Allah in terms of worship and seeking help, in the verse ﴿You [alone] we worship, and You [alone] we ask for help﴾.

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

This is the end of the commentary on Soorat al-Fātiḥah.
All praise and thanks are for Allah, and may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his family, and his Companions abundantly until the Day of Judgement.



[4] Qadari: follower of a theological school of thought that denied the divine will and decree, and said that man has absolute free will, therefore whatever he does is purely his choice and his will is independent of the will of Allah.

[5] Jabari: follower of a theological school of thought that said that man has no free will, and whatever he does of good or evil is because it is decreed for him, and he is therefore compelled to do it and has no choice in the matter.

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02.
Soorat al-Baqarah

(Madani)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah,
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

﴿الٓمٓ ﴿١﴾ ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ ۛ فِيهِ ۛ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢﴾ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ
وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ
وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٤﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥﴾﴾

(سورة البقرة: ١-٥)

2:1. Alif. Lâm. Meem.[6]

2:2. This is the Book about which there is no doubt; in it is guidance for those who fear Allah,

2:3. Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them;

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[6] Groups of letters (*al-ḥuroof al-muqaṭṭa'ah*) appear at the beginning of several soorahs. The most correct scholarly view states that we are required to believe in them as they appear to be, without delving into their meaning, knowledge of which we should leave to Allah. We believe that they were not revealed in vain, and that there is wisdom behind them of which we are not aware.

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2:4. And who believe in the Revelation sent down to you, and in what was sent before your time, and believe with certainty in the hereafter.

2:5. It is they who are following guidance from their Lord and it is they who will prosper.

We have discussed the *basmalah* (the phrase *bismillâh ir-Raḥmân ir-Raḥeem*) above. With regard to the letters that appear at the beginning of some soorahs, the most prudent approach is to refrain from discussing their meaning, without basing that on any *shar'i* (of or pertaining to Sharia; Islamic) text, whilst being certain that Allah (ﷻ) did not reveal them in vain; rather there is wisdom behind that, of which we are not aware.

﴿This is the Book﴾ that is, this great Book is the Book in a true sense; it contains that which the previous Books did not contain of great knowledge and clear truth. So ﴿there is no doubt﴾ about it in any way, shape or form. Stating that there is no doubt implies the opposite; the opposite of doubt is certainty, so this Book contains certain knowledge that dispels doubt. This is a useful principle to note, that when it is stated that something is not the case, that inevitably refers to the opposite.

As it is based on certainty, and guidance cannot be attained except on the basis of certainty, Allah says: ﴿in it is guidance for those who fear Allah﴾. Guidance is the means of being directed away from misguidance and doubt, and it is the means of following the proper ways. Guidance is mentioned, but to what is not mentioned; Allah did not say guidance towards achieving such and such a purpose or to such and such a thing, because He intended it to be general in meaning. It is guidance to that which is in people's best interests in both realms (this world and the hereafter). So it is guidance for people in all matters, both fundamental and minor. It differentiates true from

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false, sound from flawed, and it explains to them how to follow the paths that will benefit them in this world and in the hereafter.

Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere: ﴿as guidance for humankind﴾ *(2: 185)* – which is general in meaning, but here and elsewhere He says ﴿guidance for those who fear Allah﴾ because it is, in and of itself, guidance for all people, but those who are doomed do not pay heed and they do not accept the guidance of Allah. Thus proof is established against them and they do not benefit from it because they are doomed. But the pious are those who have attained the main cause of achieving guidance, namely *taqwâ* (piety or fear of Allah), the true meaning of which is taking measures to protect themselves from the wrath and punishment of Allah by obeying His commands and heeding His prohibitions. So they are guided by it and they benefit from it in the fullest sense.

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe. If you fear Allah, He will give you the insight to distinguish between right and wrong...﴾ *(al-Anfâl 8: 29)*

So the pious are the ones who benefit from the verses (*âyât*, *lit.* signs) of the Qur'an and the signs in creation.

Guidance is of two types: guidance in the sense of being aware of the message, and guidance in the sense of being helped to follow the message. The pious have been granted both types of guidance, whereas others have not been helped to follow the message. Being aware of the message without being helped to act upon it is not guidance in any real or complete sense.

Then Allah describes the pious in terms of both inward and outward deeds, because piety (taqwâ) includes both. He says: ﴿Who believe in the unseen﴾. The true meaning of belief or faith is complete affirmation of what the Messengers taught; this also includes physical actions. It does not refer to believing in things that are visible or may be known through any of the physical senses, because in that regard there is no difference between the Muslim and the disbeliever. Rather the issue

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here is belief in the unseen, which we cannot see or know through any of the physical senses; rather we believe in it because Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) have told us of it. This faith is what distinguishes the Muslim from the disbeliever, because it is believing and affirming, with no hesitation, what Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) said. So the believer believes everything that Allah or His Messenger (ﷺ) have told him, whether he sees it or not and whether he understands it and comprehends it or not, unlike the heretics and those who disbelieve in the unseen, because their limited intellects could not grasp it, so they rejected what they could not comprehend. Thus their intellect was corrupted and their thinking was flawed, whilst the thinking of the believers, who were guided by Allah, was sound.

Belief in the unseen includes belief in everything that Allah and His Messengers have told us about unseen matters in the past and in the future, events of the hereafter and the reality of the divine attributes and their essence. So they believe in the attributes of Allah in a true sense and with certain faith, even if they do not understand their essence.

Then Allah says: ﴿establish prayer﴾. He did not say that they "do" the prayer or "perform" the prayer, because it is not sufficient to only do the outward motions. Establishing prayer means establishing its outward form completely, with all its essential and obligatory parts and fulfilling its conditions, as well as establishing it inwardly, paying attention to its essence, which means having presence of mind whilst praying, and pondering the meaning of what one is saying and doing. Such is the prayer of which Allah says:

﴿...for verily prayer keeps [one] away from obscenity and wickedness...﴾ *(al-'Ankaboot 29: 45)*

– and this is the prayer that brings reward. The individual will be rewarded for his prayer only inasmuch he offered it with presence of mind. This applies to both obligatory and supererogatory prayers.

﴿and spend out of what We have provided for them﴾. This includes both obligatory spending, such as *zakâh* and spending on one's wives,

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relatives, slaves and so on, and spending on all kinds of charitable causes, which is encouraged in Islam (*mustaḥabb*). The recipients of this spending are not mentioned, because there are so many different ways of spending and because spending in and of itself is a means of drawing close to Allah. The word *min* (translated here as ﴿out of﴾) refers to some of the wealth; this draws attention to the fact that all that is expected of them is to give a small portion of their wealth, in such a way that does not harm them and is not burdensome; in fact they themselves benefit from spending and their brothers will also benefit.

﴿what We have provided for them﴾. This indicates that this wealth that you possess was not obtained by your strength and efforts; rather it is provision that Allah has bestowed upon you and blessed you with. Therefore, as He has blessed you and favoured you above many of His slaves, you should show gratitude to Him by giving some of that with which He has blessed you, thus helping (literally, consoling) your brothers who are destitute.

Allah (ﷻ) often mentions prayer and zakâh together in the Qur'an, because prayer is a reflection of sincerity towards Allah, and zakâh and spending are a reflection of kindness towards His slaves. The sign of a person's being blessed (destined for paradise) is his sincerity towards Allah and his striving to help and benefit people, just as the sign of a person's being doomed (destined for hell) is that he does not have these two characteristics, sincerity and kindness.

﴿And who believe in the Revelation sent down to you﴾, namely the Qur'an and Sunnah. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...For Allah has sent down to you the Book and wisdom...﴾ *(an-Nisâ' 4: 113)*

So the pious believe in everything that the Messenger (ﷺ) brought, and they do not differentiate between what he brought, believing in some parts and not believing in others, either by rejecting them or interpreting them in a manner other than that which was intended, as some of the innovators do, who misinterpret the texts that point

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to something other than what they say, which results in them not believing in the correct meaning, even if they believe the wording. Therefore they do not believe in them in a true sense.

﴿and in what was sent before your time﴾. This includes belief in all the previous Books; belief in the Books implies belief in the Messengers and everything that the Books contain, especially the Torah, Gospel and Psalms. This is something unique to the believers, that they believe in all the divinely revealed Books and in all the Messengers, and they do not differentiate between any of them.

﴿and believe with certainty in the hereafter﴾. The hereafter is that which comes after death; it is singled out for mention after discussing beliefs in general terms, because belief in the Last Day is one of the pillars of faith, and because it gives one the strongest motive to hope for reward, fear punishment and strive hard. Certainty is perfect knowledge that leaves no room for doubt at all and should prompt one to strive hard and do righteous deeds.

﴿It is they﴾ that is, those who have these praiseworthy characteristics ﴿who are following guidance from their Lord﴾. The word guidance (*hudā*) appears in the indefinite form, which in Arabic is an indication of how great it is; what guidance can be greater than the characteristics mentioned above, of having sound belief and righteous deeds? True guidance cannot be anything but the guidance followed by these people; anything that is contrary to that is misguidance.

The preposition (in the phrase translated here as ﴿It is they who are following guidance﴾, *lit.* "on guidance") is indicative of superiority. A different preposition is used when referring to misguidance, as in the verse:

﴿...and verily either we or you are rightly guided or clearly misguided.﴾ *(Saba' 34: 24)*

– because the one who is guided is elevated to a superior position by means of that guidance, whereas the one who is misguided is sinking in it and is despised as a result.

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﴿it is they who will prosper﴾. Prosperity means achieving what you are seeking and being saved from what you fear. Prosperity is exclusive to them, because there is no way of attaining prosperity except by following their path. Any paths other than that are paths that lead to doom, loss and destruction.

Therefore, when Allah mentions the characteristics of the true believers, He also mentions the characteristics of the disbelievers, who openly show their disbelief, stubbornly opposing the Messenger:




﴿إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ سَوَآءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَأَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝٦ خَتَمَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِمْ ۖ وَعَلَىٰٓ أَبْصَٰرِهِمْ غِشَٰوَةٌ ۖ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝٧﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٦-٧)

2:6. As for those who disbelieve, it is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them; they will not believe.

2:7. Allah has placed a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and over their eyes is a cover; theirs will be a severe penalty.

Here Allah tells us concerning those who disbelieve – that is, those who have the characteristics of disbelief, which has become a definitive part of their identity – that nothing can deter them from their disbelief and no exhortation can make them give it up. They will persist in their disbelief, so it is all the same to them whether you warn them or not, for they will not believe. The essence of disbelief is rejection or partial rejection of that which the Messenger (ﷺ) brought. These disbelievers do not benefit from the call (to Islam); it is only given in order to establish proof against them. It is as if this was intended to put an end to hope on the part of the Messenger (ﷺ)

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that they might believe: do not grieve over them *(cf. 5: 26)* and do not destroy yourself with grief for them *(cf. 35: 8)*.

Then mention is made of the impediments that prevent them from believing:

﴿Allah has placed a seal on their hearts and on their hearing﴾ that is, He has sealed them up so that faith will not enter them or penetrate them, and thus they will not understand or hear that which might benefit them.

﴿and over their eyes is a cover﴾ that is, a cover that prevents them from seeing that which might benefit them. Thus the means of attaining knowledge and goodness are blocked for them, so there is no hope for them and no goodness is to be expected of them. Rather that has been withheld from them and the door to faith is closed for them because of their disbelief, rejection and stubbornness after the truth became clear to them, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿We will turn their hearts and eyes away [from the truth], since they refused to believe in it the first time...﴾ *(al-An'ām 6: 110)*

This is an immediate punishment (in this world).

Then Allah mentions the punishment in the hereafter: ﴿theirs will be a severe penalty﴾ namely the punishment of hellfire and the eternal, everlasting wrath of the Compeller (al-Jabbār).

Then He describes the hypocrites who make an outward display of being Muslim whilst concealing disbelief in their hearts:

﴿وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ ءَامَنَّا بِٱللَّهِ وَبِٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ وَمَا هُم بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨﴾ يُخَٰدِعُونَ ٱللَّهَ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ إِلَّآ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٩﴾ فِى قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ مَرَضًا ۖ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌۢ بِمَا كَانُوا۟ يَكْذِبُونَ ﴿١٠﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٨-١٠)

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2:8. Among people there are some who say: We believe in Allah and the Last Day, but in fact they are not believers.

2:9. They seek to deceive Allah and those who believe, but they are not deceiving anyone except themselves, although they do not realise.

2:10. In their hearts is a disease; and Allah has increased their disease. Theirs will be a painful penalty for their persistent lying.

Hypocrisy means outwardly pretending to be good whilst concealing evil. This definition includes both hypocrisy in beliefs and hypocrisy in actions. The Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned something similar when he said:
«The signs of the hypocrite are three: when he speaks he lies, when he makes a promise he breaks it, and when he is entrusted with something he betrays that trust.» (Bukhari and Muslim)[7]

Another report adds:
«When he disputes, he resorts to foul speech.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

﴿We will turn their hearts and eyes away [from the truth], since they refused to believe in it the first time...﴾ *(al-An'ām 6: 110)*

The kind of hypocrisy in belief that puts one beyond the pale of Islam is that which Allah ascribed to the hypocrites in this soorah and elsewhere. Hypocrisy did not exist before the migration of the Messenger (ﷺ) from Makkah to Madinah; after he migrated, in the battle of Badr Allah caused the believers to prevail and made them

[7] All hadiths in this text have been checked and verified by IIPH's researchers. It is rare, but it does happen that a hadith is not verifiable within the timeframe of researching and editing the book. In that case, a decision is made by the editorial board as to whether or not to include the hadith. It is IIPH's policy not to include weak hadiths or fabricated (fake) hadiths in our publications. If a weak hadith is included in any text, it is only because the author of the book discusses it as a weak hadith. (Editor)

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victorious, and those people in Madinah who had not become Muslim were humiliated. For that reason, some of them pretended to become Muslim, out of fear and by way of deceit, in order to protect themselves and their wealth. So they lived among the Muslims, pretending to be of their number, when in reality they were not Muslims.

By His kindness towards the believers, Allah described the characteristics (of the hypocrites) by which they might be recognised, so that the believers would not be deceived by them and so that (the hypocrites themselves) might be discouraged from committing many of their evil actions. Allah (ﷻ) said:

﴿The hypocrites are afraid lest a soorah be sent down concerning them...﴾ *(at-Tawbah 9: 64)*

(In this passage), Allah described them in terms of the essence of hypocrisy:

﴿Among people there are some who say: We believe in Allah and the Last Day – but in fact they are not believers﴾. They paid lip service to that which was not in their hearts, so Allah showed them to be liars by saying ﴿but in fact they are not believers﴾, because true faith is that which is confirmed in the heart and on the lips. Theirs was an attempt to deceive Allah and His believing slaves.

Deceit means pretending one thing whilst concealing something else so that the deceiver may get what he wants from the one whom he is deceiving. These hypocrites were behaving in this manner with Allah and His slaves, but their deceit backfired on them. This is a kind of miracle or wonder, because the deceiver usually either gets what he wants or he remains safe without gaining or losing anything. But in this case, the deceit of the hypocrites backfired on them. It was as if they did what they did of plotting and scheming in order to harm and doom themselves, because Allah (ﷻ) is not harmed by their deceit at all, and neither are His believing slaves. The believers are not harmed if the hypocrites pretend to believe in order to protect their wealth and lives, because their plotting will eventually backfire on them, which

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will result in disgrace and scandal in this world, as well as ongoing regret because of what the believers achieve of power and victory.

Then in the hereafter, they will have a painful and devastating punishment because of their lies, disbelief and evil doing. But in their ignorance and foolishness they do not realise that.

﴿In their hearts is a disease﴾. What is meant by disease here is the disease of doubt, confusion and hypocrisy. The heart is vulnerable to two (spiritual) diseases that make it unhealthy and unbalanced: the disease of false doubts and the disease of desires that may lead to destruction. Disbelief, hypocrisy, doubt and innovation are all (spiritual) diseases that result from doubts and confusion. *Zinâ* (illicit sexual activity) and the inclination towards immoral actions and sin result from the disease of desires, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...lest one in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire...﴾ *(al-Aḥzâb 33: 32)*

– this has to do with the desire for zinâ (fornication or adultery). The one who is truly safe is the one who is protected from these two diseases, for he will have certainty and faith, and will be patient in refraining from all sins; thus he will enjoy good spiritual health.

﴿In their hearts is a disease; and Allah has increased their disease﴾. This verse, which speaks of the hypocrites, highlights Allah's wisdom in decreeing sin for the sinners: because of their previous sins, He causes them to commit further sins that will incur His punishment, as He says elsewhere:

﴿We will turn their hearts and eyes away [from the truth], since they refused to believe in it the first time...﴾ *(al-An'âm 6: 110)*

﴿...So when they chose to deviate [from the truth], Allah caused their hearts to deviate [from right guidance]...﴾ *(aṣ-Ṣaff 61: 5)*

﴿As for those in whose hearts is a disease, it will add doubt to their doubt...﴾ *(at-Tawbah 9: 125)*

So the punishment for sin is more sin, just as the reward for good deeds is more good deeds. Allah (ﷻ) says:

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﴿Allah increases in guidance those who are guided...﴾ *(Maryam 19: 76)*




﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ ﴿١١﴾ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَٰكِن لَّا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١١-١٢)

2:11. When it is said to them: Do not make mischief in the land, they say: We only want to put things right.

2:12. Indeed they are the ones who make mischief, but they do not realise.

When these hypocrites are told not to make mischief in the land, which means committing sins and deeds based on disbelief, including disclosing the secrets of the believers to their enemies and taking the disbelievers as close friends,

﴿they say: We only want to put things right﴾. Thus they both strive to cause mischief in the land and defend their actions as being an effort to put things straight rather than causing mischief – contrary to what is really happening, and combining wrongdoing with the belief that it is right. This is a greater offence than committing sin whilst believing that it is indeed a sin; the one who does that is better off and there is more hope that he will return to the right path.

Because their saying ﴿We only want to put things right﴾ would seem to imply that they are the only ones who are putting things right, which in turn would imply that the believers are not putting things right, Allah refuted their claims by saying: ﴿Indeed they are the ones who make mischief﴾. There is no greater mischief than that of those who disbelieve in the signs of Allah, bar people from following the path of Allah, try to deceive Allah and His close friends and take as allies those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), yet still claim that they are putting things right. Can there be any

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mischief greater than this? But they do not know anything that will benefit them, even though the knowledge that they have is sufficient to establish proof against them. Committing sin is only regarded as mischief because it results in damage to whatever is on the face of the earth of grains, fruits, trees and plants, as a result of the blights that befall them because of sin, and because putting things right on earth is achieved when people obey Allah and believe in Him. It is for this purpose that Allah created humanity and caused them to dwell on earth, and He bestowed provisions upon them to help them to obey and worship Him. If they do the opposite of that on earth, then they are spreading corruption which causes ruin by using what is on earth in a way other than that for which it was created.




﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا۟ كَمَآ ءَامَنَ ٱلنَّاسُ قَالُوٓا۟ أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَآ ءَامَنَ ٱلسُّفَهَآءُ ۗ أَلَآ إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ ٱلسُّفَهَآءُ وَلَٰكِن لَّا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٣)

2:13. When it is said to them: Believe as the people believe, they say: Shall we believe as the fools believe? Indeed it is they who are the fools, but they do not know.

That is, when it is said to the hypocrites: Believe as the people believe; this refers to the Companions (*raḍiya Allâhu 'anhum* – may Allah be pleased with all of them), whose faith was affirmed in their hearts and on their lips. But the hypocrites said, on the basis of their false accusation: Shall we believe as the fools believe? They were referring to the Companions (رضي الله عنهم), thinking that it was their alleged foolishness that had led them to believe and to leave their homelands and oppose the disbelievers. In their (the hypocrites') view, wisdom dictated the opposite of that. So they described them

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as foolish, implying that they themselves were people of wisdom and understanding.

But Allah (ﷻ) refuted their argument and stated that in reality they were the fools, because real foolishness is for a person to ignore what is in his best interests and strive for that which will harm him, and this description was true in their case. On the other hand, wisdom and reason are reflected in a person's knowing what is in his best interests and striving for that which will benefit him and ward off harm from him, which was true in the case of the Companions and the believers. What matters is sound proof, not mere claims and empty words.




﴿ وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ شَيَاطِينِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٤-١٥)

2:14. When they meet those who believe, they say: We believe; but when they are alone with their devils, they say: We are really with you; we were only mocking.

2:15. Allah is mocking them, and gives them free rein in transgression so that they wander blindly.

This refers to them saying verbally that which was not in their hearts. When they met the believers, they would pretend that they were following their path and that they were with them, but when they were alone with their devils – that is, their leaders in evil – they said: We are really with you; we were only mocking the believers by pretending to them that we are following their path. This is how they are inwardly and outwardly, but the plotting of evil only rebounds on those who plot *(cf. 35: 43)*.

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﴿Allah is mocking them, and gives them free rein in transgression so that they wander blindly﴾. This is their punishment for mocking His slaves. By way of mocking them, Allah makes attractive to them the miserable situation in which they are and the evil way they are following, to the point that they think that they are with the believers, because Allah did not give the believers power over them. And He will mock them on the Day of Resurrection by giving them visible light along with the believers, then when the believers begin to walk in their light, the light of the hypocrites will be extinguished and they will be left in confusion after the light has gone. How great will be their despair after their hopes had been raised.

﴿The hypocrites will call out to the believers: Were we not with you? They will say: Yes, but you gave in to confusion and temptation, you kept waiting [for some misfortune to befall us], you doubted...﴾ *(al-Hadeed 57: 14)*

﴿and gives them free rein﴾ that is, He lets them get carried away ﴿in transgression﴾ that is, in their evildoing and disbelief ﴿so that they wander blindly﴾ that is, confused and hesitant. This is how Allah (ﷻ) mocks them.

Then Allah (ﷻ) describes how they really are:

﴿ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوُا الضَّلَالَةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَبِحَت تِّجَارَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٦)

2:16. These are the ones who have traded guidance for error, but their trade brings no profit and they are not guided.

These people, namely the hypocrites who have the characteristics described here, ﴿are the ones who have traded guidance for error﴾ that is, they preferred misguidance, like a buyer who wants a particular

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item and because of his desire for it, he is willing to pay a high price. This is one of the best likenesses that explain how they are, because it likens misguidance, which is the ultimate evil, to an item for purchase, and it likens guidance, which is the ultimate good, to the price. So they gave away guidance and had no interest in it, in return for misguidance because they wanted it. This is their trade, and what a bad deal it is.

If the one who trades a dinar (gold coin) for a dirham (silver coin) is a loser, then how about the one who trades a precious stone for a dirham? How about the one who trades guidance for misguidance, chooses doom over blessing, and prefers the most vile and base of things to the most sublime? His trade brings no profit; rather it incurs the greatest loss.

﴿...Say: Indeed, the real losers will be those who lose their own souls and their families on the Day of Resurrection. That is indeed manifest loss.﴾ *(az-Zumar 39: 15)*

﴿and they are not guided﴾ this confirms that they are misguided, and that they did not gain anything from guidance. These are their abhorrent characteristics.

Then a likeness is given that highlights their character in a very clear manner:




﴿مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ ٱلَّذِى ٱسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّآ أَضَآءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُۥ ذَهَبَ ٱللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِى ظُلُمَٰتٍ لَّا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ صُمٌّۢ بُكْمٌ عُمْىٌ فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ أَوْ كَصَيِّبٍ مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ فِيهِ ظُلُمَٰتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَجْعَلُونَ أَصَٰبِعَهُمْ فِىٓ ءَاذَانِهِم مِّنَ ٱلصَّوَٰعِقِ حَذَرَ ٱلْمَوْتِ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ مُحِيطٌۢ بِٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ يَكَادُ ٱلْبَرْقُ يَخْطَفُ أَبْصَٰرَهُمْ ۖ كُلَّمَآ أَضَآءَ لَهُم مَّشَوْا۟ فِيهِ وَإِذَآ أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا۟ ۚ وَلَوْ شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَٰرِهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٠﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٧-٢٠)

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2:17. Their likeness is that of a man who kindled a fire; when it illuminated all around him, Allah took away their light and left them in utter darkness, unable to see.

2:18. Deaf, dumb, and blind, they will not return [to the right path].

2:19. Or [another likeness] is that of a heavy downpour from the sky, accompanied by darkness, thunder and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears to keep out the stunning thunder-clap, for fear of death. But Allah encompasses the disbelievers.

2:20. The lightning almost snatches away their sight; every time it flashes, they walk [a few steps] therein, but when the darkness overtakes them again, they stand still. And if Allah willed, He could take away their hearing and their sight; for Allah has power over all things.

The exact likeness that describes the situation they are in is that of a man who kindled fire; when it was very dark and his need for a fire was great, he lit it from someone else's fire, as he had no fire of his own and needed to bring it from someone else. Then when the fire illuminated the area around him and he could see his surroundings and any potential dangers, and thus he felt safe and benefitted from the fire and was pleased with it, thinking that he was in control of it – whilst he was like that, Allah took away its light, so that he lost the light and any pleasure that he had felt because of it, and he remained in deep darkness with the fire still burning, as its illumination has disappeared but its burning effect still remained. Thus he was left in many layers of darkness: the darkness of the night, the darkness of the cloud, the darkness of the rain and the darkness that comes after the light disappears. How will the one who is in such a situation be? That is how these hypocrites are. They took the fire of faith from the believers, but having faith was not characteristic of them; rather they took the fire of faith in order to protect their lives and keep their wealth safe, so they had a kind of security in this world. Then whilst they

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were like that, death came to them and took away the benefit of that light, and there befell them all kinds of distress, grief and torment, as well as the darkness of disbelief, the darkness of hypocrisy and the darkness of various kinds of sin. After that came the darkness of hellfire – an evil place to settle in *(cf. 14: 29)*.

Hence Allah says concerning them: ﴿Deaf﴾ that is, unable to hear the truth.
﴿dumb﴾ that is, unable to speak the truth
﴿blind﴾ that is, unable to see the truth.
﴿they will not return [to the right path]﴾ because they have forsaken the truth after having come to know it, so they will not return to it, unlike those who kept away from the truth as the result of ignorance and misguidance; they did not understand it and they are more likely to come back to it than the hypocrites.

﴿Or [another likeness] is that of a heavy downpour from the sky﴾ that is, they are like one who is caught in a heavy downpour from the sky, which is rain that comes down in copious amounts.
﴿accompanied by darkness﴾ namely the darkness of the night, the darkness of the cloud and the darkness of the rain
﴿thunder﴾ which is the sound that is heard from the cloud
﴿and lightning﴾ which is the flashing light that is seen with the cloud.

﴿every time it flashes﴾ that is, every time the lightning flashes in that darkness ﴿they walk [a few steps] therein, but when the darkness overtakes them again, they stand still﴾ that is, they halt.

This is the situation of the hypocrites. When they hear the Qur'an and its commands and prohibitions, promises and warnings, they put their fingers in their ears and turn away from its commands and prohibitions, promises and warnings. They are terrified of its warnings and disturbed by its promises (to the believers). Hence they turn away as much as they can and they hate it as the one who is caught in a downpour hates it, and when he hears the thunder he puts his

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fingers in his ears, for fear of death. In the case of the one who is caught in a downpour, that could help him to be safe, but in the case of the hypocrites, how could they become safe at the time when Allah encompasses them by His power and knowledge, so they cannot escape from Him or frustrate Him; rather He records their deeds and will requite them in full.

As they are suffering from deafness, dumbness and blindness in a metaphorical sense, and they are barred from the paths to faith, Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And if Allah willed, He could take away their hearing and their sight﴾ that is, in a physical sense. This is a warning to them aimed at making them afraid of punishment in this world, so that they will adopt caution and be deterred from some of their evil and hypocrisy. ﴿for Allah has power over all things﴾, hence nothing is beyond Him; by His power, if He wills something He does it, and no one can prevent Him or oppose Him.

In this verse and others like it we see a refutation of the Qadaris[8] who say that their deeds are not subject to the power and control of Allah (ﷻ), as this verse shows that their deeds are among the things that are included in the words ﴿for Allah has power over all things﴾.




﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ رَبَّكُمُ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَكُمْ وَٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ ٱلَّذِى جَعَلَ لَكُمُ ٱلْأَرْضَ فِرَٰشًا وَٱلسَّمَآءَ بِنَآءً وَأَنزَلَ مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِۦ مِنَ ٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ ۖ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا۟ لِلَّهِ أَندَادًا وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢١-٢٢)

[8] Qadari: follower of a theological school of thought that denied the divine will and decree and said that man has absolute free will, therefore whatever he does is purely his choice and his will is independent of the will of Allah.

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2:21. O people! Worship your Lord, Who created you and those who came before you, that you may become pious;

2:22. Who has made the earth a resting-place for you, and the heavens an edifice; and sent down rain from the heavens; and brought forth therewith fruits as a provision for you; so do not set up rivals to Allah when you know better.

This is a general command that is addressed to all people, instructing them to worship Him in a comprehensive way by obeying the commands of Allah, heeding His prohibitions and believing in His words. Thus He commands them to do that for which He created them, as He says:

﴿I have not created the jinn and humans except to worship Me.﴾ *(adh-Dhâriyât 51: 56)*

Then Allah tells us why it is obligatory to worship Him alone, for He is your Lord Who has bestowed upon you all kinds of blessings: He created you after you were nothing, He created those who came before you and He bestowed upon you blessings both obvious and hidden. He made the earth a resting-place for you, on which you build structures for your benefit; He caused you to cultivate it and till it; He enabled you to travel from one place to another; and He granted you many ways of benefitting from it. He made the heavens an edifice for the earth on which you dwell, and He placed in it benefits that you need, such as the sun, moon and stars.

﴿and sent down rain from the heavens﴾. The word *samâ'* (translated here as ﴿heavens﴾) refers to anything that is above you. Hence the commentators said that what is meant by ﴿heavens﴾ (samâ') here is the clouds, from which Allah (ﷻ) sends down rain.

﴿and brought forth therewith fruits﴾ this may include other crops such as grains, dates and so on.

﴿as a provision for you﴾, to feed and sustain you so that you might survive by means of it and enjoy it.

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﴿so do not set up rivals to Allah﴾ that is, equals from among His creation which you worship as you should worship Allah and love as you should love Allah, although they are created beings like you who receive provision and are under His control, having not the slightest power either in heaven or on earth, and they cannot benefit or harm you at all.
﴿when you know better﴾ that is, when you know that Allah has no partner or equal with regard to the power of creation, granting of provision or control of the universe, and He has no partner in worship. So how can you worship other gods besides Him when you know these things? This is something that is very strange and extremely foolish.

This verse combines the command to worship Allah alone and the prohibition on worshipping anything other than Him. It offers clear evidence that it is obligatory to worship Him and that the worship of anything other than Him is invalid. This refers to tawḥeed ar-ruboobiyah (oneness of the divine Lordship), which implies that He is the only One Who creates, grants provision and controls. If anyone accepts that He has no partner in these things, then by the same token he should also accept that Allah has no partner in worship. This is the clearest rational evidence for the oneness of the Creator and the invalidity of associating partners with Him.

The words ﴿that you may become pious﴾ may be understood as meaning that if you worship Allah alone, then you will avoid His wrath and punishment, because you have taken measures to ward that off from yourselves. Or it may mean that if you worship Allah (alone), you will become one of the pious who are described as fearing Allah. Both meanings are sound and complement one another. The one who worships Allah properly is one of the pious, and whoever is pious will be saved from the wrath and punishment of Allah (ﷻ).

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﴿وَإِن كُنتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّن مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَن تَفْعَلُوا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٣-٢٤)

2:23. And if you are in doubt concerning what We have revealed to Our slave, then produce a soorah like it; and call your helpers besides Allah, if you are truthful [in your claim].

2:24. But if you cannot do it, and you can never do it, then beware of the fire whose fuel is men and stones, which is prepared for the disbelievers.

These verses provide rational evidence that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was genuine and that his message was true.

﴿And if you are in doubt...﴾ This is addressed to those who opposed the Messenger (ﷺ) and rejected his message, saying that he was lying. (What is meant is:) if you are doubtful and are uncertain concerning what We have sent down to Our slave, as to whether it is true or not, then here is a fair argument which will decide the matter between you and him. That argument is that he is a human being like you; he is not the most eloquent or most knowledgeable among you. You have known him from when he was small, as he grew up among you. He does not read or write, yet he has brought you a Book that he says is from Allah, but you say that he is speaking of his own accord and has made it up. If the matter is as you say, then produce a soorah like it, with the help of any one you can find among your helpers and witnesses; this will be something easy for you, especially since you are people of eloquence and oratory, and you are fuelled by deep enmity towards the Messenger (ﷺ). If you can produce a soorah like it, then he is as you say, but if you cannot produce a soorah like

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it, and you fail utterly, (rest assured that) you will never be able to produce a soorah like it. However, this (challenge) is offered by way of showing fairness and going along with you. This is a great sign and clear evidence that he is telling the truth and that his message is true. Then (if you fail to meet the challenge) it will be obligatory for you to follow him and protect yourselves from hellfire which reached the ultimate heat because its fuel is people and stones; it is not like the fire of this world that is fuelled with wood. The fire of hell is prepared for those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), so beware of disbelieving in his Messenger (ﷺ) after it has become clear to you that he is indeed the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

This and similar verses are called the verses of challenge; they prove that people are incapable of producing anything like this Qur'an. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say: Verily, if all of humankind and the jinn were to come together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could never produce the like thereof, even if they helped one another.﴾ *(al-Isrâ' 17: 88)*

How can the words of one who is created from dust be like the words of the Lord of lords? How can one who is lacking in all aspects produce words like the words of the Most Perfect, Whose perfection is absolute and Who is completely independent of means? This is not possible and it is not within any human's capability. Anyone who has the slightest knowledge and appreciation of (Arabic) literary and oratory style will, if he compares the Qur'an with other eloquent speech, clearly see a great difference between them.

﴿And if you are in doubt...﴾ This verse indicates that the one for whom there is hope of guidance away from misguidance is the one who has doubts and is confused, who cannot tell truth from falsehood. When the truth becomes clear to such a one, he is more likely to be guided if he is sincere in seeking the truth. As for the stubborn one who recognises the truth but ignores it, he cannot come back because

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he has turned away from the truth after it became clear to him and he did not turn away from it out of ignorance, so he is a hopeless case.

By the same token, the doubter who is not sincere or serious in seeking the truth and turns away indifferently will usually not be guided.

Describing the Messenger (ﷺ) as being a slave in the context of discussing such an important matter is indicative of his greatest characteristic, which is being a true slave of Allah, doing his duty towards Him in a manner unmatched by anyone else before or since.

He is also described as being a slave in the context of the *isrâ'* (Prophet's Night Journey), as Allah says:

﴿Glory be to Him Who took His slave for a journey by night...﴾ *(al-Isrâ' 17: 1)*

– and in the context of sending down Revelation, as He says:

﴿Blessed be He Who sent down the criterion [between right and wrong, namely the Qur'an] to His slave, so that it may be a warning to the worlds.﴾ *(al-Furqân 25: 1)*

﴿which is prepared for the disbelievers﴾ this and similar verses support the view of *ahl as-Sunnah wal-jamâ'ah*, which is that paradise and hell are two created entities; this is unlike the view of the Mutazilites. It also tells us that the monotheists, even if they commit some sins, will not remain in hell forever, because Allah says that it is ﴿prepared for the disbelievers﴾. If the sinners among the monotheists were to remain therein forever, it would not say that it is prepared for the disbelievers alone. This is unlike the view of the Kharijites and Mutazilites.

It also indicates that punishment becomes due for reasons, namely disbelief and various kinds of sin.

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﴿وَبَشِّرِ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ ۖ كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا۟ مِنْهَا مِن ثَمَرَةٍ رِّزْقًا ۙ قَالُوا۟ هَٰذَا ٱلَّذِى رُزِقْنَا مِن قَبْلُ ۖ وَأُتُوا۟ بِهِۦ مُتَشَٰبِهًا ۖ وَلَهُمْ فِيهَآ أَزْوَٰجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ ۖ وَهُمْ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٥)

2:25. And give glad tidings to those who believe and do righteous deeds, that they will have gardens, through which rivers flow. Every time they are provided with fruits therefrom, they will say: This is what we were provided with before, because they will be given things that resemble one another; and they will have therein pure spouses; and they will abide therein forever.

As Allah mentioned the requital of the disbelievers, here He mentions the reward of the believers, those who do righteous deeds. This is the style of the Qur'an, which combines encouragement with deterrent so that the individual will be motivated and deterred at the same time, and he will balance fear with hope.

﴿And give glad tidings﴾ that is, O Messenger and those who convey his message

﴿to those who believe﴾ in their hearts

﴿and do righteous deeds﴾ by taking physical action, thus confirming their faith with their good deeds.

Good deeds are described as righteous (*ṣâliḥât*) because by means of them people's affairs, both religious and worldly, in this world and in the hereafter, are set straight or put right (*taṣluḥ*), and all troubles will be eliminated. Thus he will become one of the righteous (*ṣâliḥoon*) who are qualified to be close to the Most Merciful in His paradise.

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So give them the glad tidings ﴿that they will have gardens﴾ filled with wonderful trees, fine fruits and extensive shade, hence the one who enters this garden will enjoy it and the one who dwells in it will be happy.

﴿through which rivers flow﴾ that is, rivers of water, milk, honey and wine, which they will cause to spring up whenever they want and direct them wherever they want; those trees will be irrigated by them and will produce all kinds of fruits.

﴿Every time they are provided with fruits therefrom, they will say: This is what we were provided with before﴾ that is, this is the same type, with the same qualities. All of them will be similar in beauty and delicious taste; there will be no fruit that stands out from the others (because all of them will be good). There will be no time in which they are deprived of pleasure; they will constantly have the delight of eating these fruits.

﴿because they will be given things that resemble one another﴾. It was said that they will resemble one another in name, but will have different tastes; or that they will resemble one another in colour, but will have different names; or that they will resemble one another in beauty, delicious taste and enjoyability. Perhaps this last view is the one that is correct.

Then, having mentioned their dwellings and the provision of food, drink and fruits, Allah mentions their spouses and describes them in the most perfect, concise and clear way:
﴿and they will have therein pure spouses﴾. He did not describe them as purified from a specific defect; this indicates that they will be pure in all aspects. They will be pure in terms of their attitude and character, free of physical defects, pure in speech and chaste in their gaze. With regard to their attitude, they will be friendly and endearing to their husbands because of their good attitude; they will behave in a manner that is expected of a good wife and will be well-mannered in word and deed. With regard to being physically pure, they will be

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free of menses, postpartum bleeding, vaginal discharges, urine, stools, mucus, sputum and bad smells. They will also be physically pure in the sense that they will possess perfect beauty, with no physical defect or hint of ugliness; rather they will be good and beautiful *(cf. 55: 70)*. They will be pure in speech and chaste in their gaze, gazing only at their husbands and refraining from all foul speech.

This verse speaks of the giver of glad tidings, the recipients thereof, the things promised in those tidings and the means of attaining what is promised. The giver of glad tidings is the Messenger (ﷺ) or those among his Ummah who convey his message. The recipients of the glad tidings are the believers who do righteous deeds. The things promised in these glad tidings are the gardens described in this manner (that is, the gardens of paradise). The means of attaining what is promised is faith and righteous deeds. There is no other way of attaining it. This is the greatest of glad tidings, conveyed by the best of Allah's creation, highlighting the best means.

It also shows us that it is encouraged to give glad tidings to the believers and to motivate them to do good deeds by referring to the reward and fruits of those deeds. Thus doing such deeds will become light and easy. The greatest good sign (of glad tidings) is when an individual is guided and enabled to believe and do righteous deeds. That is the first sign of glad tidings, and the foundation thereof. The second such sign is when the angels give him glad tidings at the time of death. The final good sign is when he reaches those eternal blessings (in paradise). We ask Allah to make us among those who are given these glad tidings.




﴿۞ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِۦٓ أَن يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَّا بَعُوضَةً فَمَا فَوْقَهَا ۚ فَأَمَّا ٱلَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا۟ فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ ٱلْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ ۖ وَأَمَّا ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَآ

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أَرَادَ ٱللَّهُ بِهَٰذَا مَثَلًا ۘ يُضِلُّ بِهِۦ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِى بِهِۦ كَثِيرًا ۚ وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِۦٓ
إِلَّا ٱلْفَٰسِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ يَنقُضُونَ عَهْدَ ٱللَّهِ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مِيثَٰقِهِۦ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَآ أَمَرَ ٱللَّهُ
بِهِۦٓ أَن يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْخَٰسِرُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٦-٢٧)

2:26. Allah is not ashamed to present an example – that of a mosquito, or of something even more insignificant. Those who believe know that it is truth from their Lord; but those who disbelieve say: What does Allah mean by this example? He causes many to go astray thereby and He guides many thereby, but He does not cause any to go astray thereby except the evildoers.

2:27. Those who break Allah's covenant after it has been made binding, and sever the bonds that Allah has commanded to be upheld, and spread mischief in the land – they are the ones who are the losers.

﴿Allah is not ashamed to present an example﴾ and it does not matter what it is

﴿that of a mosquito, or of something even more insignificant﴾, because these examples or likenesses convey wisdom and highlight the truth, and Allah is not ashamed to tell the truth. It is as if this is a response to those who disliked the giving of examples that referred to insignificant things and objected to Allah doing such a thing. But there is no room for objection here; rather this is a means by which Allah teaches His slaves and it is a sign of His mercy towards them. So it should be accepted gratefully. Hence Allah says:

﴿Those who believe know that it is truth from their Lord﴾, so they understand it and ponder its meaning. If they understand its message in a comprehensive manner, then their faith and belief will be increased thereby; if not, they still acknowledge that it is truth and that its meaning is true, even if the message is unclear to them. That is because

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they know that Allah does not give any examples or likenesses in vain; rather there is great wisdom behind it and great blessing in it.

﴿but those who disbelieve say: What does Allah mean by this example?﴾ They object to it and are confused, which only increases them in disbelief as it increases the believers in faith. Hence Allah says:

﴿He causes many to go astray thereby and He guides many thereby﴾. This is a description of the response of the believers and disbelievers when Qur'anic verses were believed. Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿Whenever a soorah is revealed, some of them [the hypocrites] say: Which of you has this increased in faith? As for those who believe, it does indeed increase their faith and they rejoice. As for those in whose hearts is a disease, it will add doubt to their doubt, and they will die while they are still disbelievers.﴾ *(at-Tawbah 9: 124-125)*

There is no greater blessing to people than the revelation of Qur'anic verses, yet for some it is a trial and a source of confusion and misguidance which only adds further to their evil, whilst for others it is a gift and mercy that increases them in goodness. Glory be to the One Who makes His slaves so different and is the only One Who guides them or leaves them astray.

Then Allah speaks of His wisdom in leaving some of them to go astray, and confirms that the reason for that is justice on His part. ﴿but He does not cause any to go astray thereby except the evildoers﴾ that is, those who rebel and disobey Allah, those who stubbornly oppose the Messengers of Allah, those for whom evildoing is an essential part of their character which they do not seek to change. As wisdom dictates that they should go astray because they are not qualified to be guided, by the same token, His wisdom and grace dictate that those who believe and do righteous deeds should be guided.

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Evildoing (*fisq*) is of two types, the first of which is that which puts one beyond the pale of Islam, such as that which is mentioned in this and similar verses. The second type does not put one beyond the pale of Islam, as mentioned in the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe, if a wrongdoer comes to you with any news, investigate [and verify the facts]...﴾ *(al-Ḥujurât 49: 6)*

Then Allah describes the evildoers:

﴿Those who break Allah's covenant after it has been made binding﴾. This includes covenants between them and Him as well as covenants between them and other people which Allah has made binding upon them in the strongest terms, but they do not care about those binding obligations; rather they break them, ignore His commands, do that which He has forbidden and transgress the covenants between them and other people.

﴿and sever the bonds that Allah has commanded to be upheld﴾. This includes many things. Allah has commanded us to uphold the bond between us and Him by believing in Him, carrying out duties as His slaves. He has commanded us to uphold the bond between us and His Messenger (ﷺ) by believing in him, loving him, respecting him and fulfilling our duties towards him. He has also commanded us to uphold the bonds between us and our parents, relatives, friends and all other people by respecting those rights that Allah has commanded us to uphold.

The believers uphold the bonds that Allah has commanded us to uphold and they fulfil the related duties in a proper manner. The evildoers, on the other hand, sever those bonds and ignore them completely, replacing them with evildoing, breaking of ties and striving in sin; this is spreading mischief in the land.

﴿they﴾ namely those who meet this description ﴿are the ones who are the losers﴾ in this world and in the hereafter. They are the only ones who are losers, because their losses affect them in all circumstances,

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whatever they do or say. They do not achieve any success at all, because the condition for righteous deeds to be accepted is faith, so the one who has no faith has no righteous deeds to his credit. This kind of loss is the result of disbelief. However, with regard to that loss that may be the result of disbelief, committing sins or neglecting to do deeds that are recommended, as mentioned in the verse in which Allah says:

﴿Verily man is in a state of utter loss.﴾ *(al-'Aṣr 103: 2)*

– this is general in application and may include all humans, except those who have the characteristics of faith and righteous deeds, and exhort one another to hold fast to the truth and exhort one another to hold fast to patience *(cf. 103: 3)*. What loss really means is missing out on something good that one could have achieved and that was within one's means.




﴿كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٨)

2:28. How can you disbelieve in Allah, when you were lifeless, then He gave you life, then He will cause you to die, then He will bring you back to life, then to Him you will return?

This is a question which is intended to reflect astonishment as well as to rebuke and denounce. In other words, how could you disbelieve in Allah, Who created you from nothing and bestowed upon you all types of blessings, then He will cause you to die when you reach the appointed time, and He will requite you in the grave, then He will bring you back to life at the time of the Resurrection, then to Him you will return and He will repay you in full? As you are under His

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control, encompassed by His kindness and subject to His commands, after which you will be brought to account, is it befitting for you to disbelieve in Him? Can that be anything other than great ignorance and foolishness? Rather what is befitting for you is to believe in Him, be aware of Him, be grateful to Him, fear His punishment and hope for His reward.

 

﴿هُوَ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ لَكُم مَّا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ ٱسْتَوَىٰٓ إِلَى ٱلسَّمَآءِ فَسَوَّىٰهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَٰوَٰتٍ ۚ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٩)

2:29. It is He Who has created for you all things that are on earth, then He turned towards the heaven and made them seven heavens, and He has knowledge of all things.

﴿It is He Who has created for you all things that are on earth﴾. He has created for you, out of kindness and mercy towards you, all things on the face of the earth so that you might benefit from them, enjoy them and learn from them.

This verse indicates that the basic principle concerning all things is that they are permissible and pure, because the context here is one of reminding us of His blessings. Excluded from that is everything that is evil or foul; the prohibition on such things may also be understood from the meaning of this verse. Allah has created (all things) for our benefit, so whatever is harmful is excluded from that, and it is a blessing from Him that He has forbidden foul things to us so as to protect us from them.

﴿then He turned towards the heaven and made them seven heavens, and He has knowledge of all things﴾.

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﴿He turned towards﴾. The phrase *astawâ ilâ* (translated here as ﴿turned towards﴾) has three meanings in the Qur'an. When it appears without any preposition after it, it means attaining a level of complete perfection, as when Allah says concerning Moosâ:

﴿When he reached his prime and became fully mature [*astawâ*]...﴾ *(al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 14)*

When it is followed by the preposition *'alâ* (upon), it means rising above, as when Allah says:

﴿...and then [He] rose over [*astawâ 'alâ*] the Throne...﴾ *(al-A'râf 7: 54)*

When it is followed by the preposition *ilâ* (to), it means turning to or deciding, as in this verse, where what is meant is: when Allah (ﷻ) had created the earth, he turned to the creation of the heavens.

﴿and made them seven heavens﴾. He created them and perfected them

﴿and He has knowledge of all things﴾. So:

﴿He knows all that goes into the earth and all that comes out of it, and all that descends from heaven and all that ascends to it...﴾ *(Saba' 34: 2)* – and:

﴿Allah knows what you conceal and what you disclose.﴾ *(an-Naḥl 16: 19)*

He knows what is secret and what is yet more hidden.

Mention of Allah's creation of the universe is often followed by affirmation of His omniscience, as in this verse and as in the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿How could He Who created not know His own creation, when He is the Knower of subtleties, the All-Aware?﴾ *(al-Mulk 67: 14)*

That is because His creation of all things is the clearest evidence of His knowledge, wisdom and might.

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﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً ۖ قَالُوٓا۟ أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا
مَن يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ ٱلدِّمَآءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۖ قَالَ إِنِّيٓ
أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَعَلَّمَ ءَادَمَ ٱلْأَسْمَآءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ
فَقَالَ أَنۢبِـُٔونِي بِأَسْمَآءِ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالُوا۟ سُبْحَٰنَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَآ إِلَّا
مَا عَلَّمْتَنَآ ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلْعَلِيمُ ٱلْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣٢﴾ قَالَ يَٰٓـَٔادَمُ أَنۢبِئْهُم بِأَسْمَآئِهِمْ ۖ فَلَمَّآ أَنۢبَأَهُم
بِأَسْمَآئِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُل لَّكُمْ إِنِّيٓ أَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ
وَمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ ٱسْجُدُوا۟ لِـَٔادَمَ فَسَجَدُوٓا۟ إِلَّآ إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ
وَٱسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٣٠-٣٤)

2:30. When your Lord said to the angels: I am going to place on earth successive generations, they said: Will You place therein those who will make mischief therein and shed blood, whilst we glorify You with Your praises and proclaim Your holiness? He said: I know that which you do not know.

2:31. And He taught Adam the names of all things; then He showed them to the angels, and said: Tell me the names of these if you are right.

2:32. They said: Glory be to You, we do not know anything except what You have taught us; verily You are the All-Knowing, Most Wise.

2:33. He said: O Adam! Tell them the names of these [things]. When he had told them their names, [Allah] said: Did I not tell you that I know what is unseen in heaven and on earth, and I know what you disclose and what you conceal?

2:34. And when We said to the angels: Prostrate before Adam, and they [all] prostrated except Iblees; he refused and was arrogant; he was one of the disbelievers.

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This is the beginning of the passage that speaks of the superiority of Adam (*'alayhi as-salâm* – peace be upon him), the father of humankind. When Allah wanted to create him, He informed the angels of that and said that He was going to place him on the earth, to be followed by successive generations.

The angels (peace be upon them) said: ﴿Will You place therein those who will make mischief therein﴾ by committing sin ﴿and shed blood?﴾ This (shedding blood) is a specific matter that is mentioned after a general statement (making mischief); it is mentioned in order to highlight the seriousness of killing. This was based on what the angels thought, that the successive generations who were going to dwell on earth would do that, so they declared that the Creator was above creating such a being and that it was not befitting for Him to do so; they glorified Him and declared that they were persistent in worshipping Allah in a manner that was free of any mischief, as they said: ﴿whilst we glorify You with Your praises﴾ that is, we declare You to be above all shortcomings.

﴿And proclaim Your holiness [*nuqaddisu lak*]﴾. It may be understood as meaning: and we proclaim You alone to be holy. The phrase 'nuqaddisu lak' may also be understood as meaning: we purify ourselves for Your sake; that is, we purify ourselves by acquiring good characteristics, such as loving, fearing and glorifying Allah, and by ridding ourselves of bad characteristics.

Allah (ﷻ) said to the angels: ﴿I know﴾ concerning these successive generations ﴿that which you do not know﴾, because you are speaking on the basis of speculation, whereas I know what is apparent and what is hidden, and I know that the good that will result from the creation of these successive generations is many times greater than any evil that may result from it. If there was nothing more involved in that but that Allah (ﷻ) wanted to choose from among them the prophets, the ṣiddeeqeen, the martyrs and the righteous; and so that His signs might become manifest to His creation; and so that many acts of

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worship might be done that would not be done without the creation of these successive generations, such as jihad and so on; and so that the hidden potentials of the sons of Adam, both good and evil, might be demonstrated by means of testing them; and so that His enemies might be distinguished from His close friends, and His supporters from His opponents; and so that the hidden evil in the heart of Iblees, that was the main part of his character, might be made manifest – these are all great reasons, some of which, let alone all of them, would have been sufficient reason for that.

Because the statement of the angels was indicative of their feelings of superiority towards the successive generations that Allah was going to place on earth, Allah (ﷻ) wanted to explain to them the superiority of Adam so that they might acknowledge his status and see the perfection of Allah's wisdom and knowledge. So ﴿He taught Adam the names of all things﴾, and what these names applied to; in other words, He taught them words and meanings, to the extent that He taught them what to call large and small items.

﴿then He showed them﴾ that is, the things that were named ﴿to the angels﴾, as a test for them: would they know what these things were or not?

﴿and said: Tell me the names of these if you are right﴾, as you claim to be superior to these successive generations.

﴿They said: Glory be to You﴾ that is, it is not appropriate on our part to raise any objection to You or to go against Your command.
﴿we do not know anything﴾ whatsoever
﴿except what You have taught us﴾ by Your grace and kindness.
﴿verily You are the All-Knowing, Most Wise﴾; You encompass all things with Your knowledge, so nothing is hidden from You, even so much as a small ant or anything greater than that, on earth or in heaven.

The Most Wise is the One to Whom belongs perfect wisdom from which no creature is excluded; nothing of what He commands is beyond His wisdom. He has not created anything except for a reason

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and He has not commanded anything except for a reason. Wisdom means putting things in the appropriate place. So the angels recognised the wisdom and knowledge of Allah and acknowledged their own inability to know the slightest thing. They also acknowledged Allah's grace towards them and His teaching them that which they did not know.

Then Allah said: ﴿O Adam! Tell them the names of these [things]﴾ that is, the names of the things that Allah had shown to the angels but they were unable to name them.

﴿When he had told them their names﴾, it became clear to the angels that Adam was superior to them, and they clearly saw the wisdom and knowledge of the Creator in creating these successive generations.

﴿[Allah] said: Did I not tell you that I know what is unseen in heaven and on earth﴾. This refers to what is hidden from us, so we do not see it. If He knows what is hidden or unseen, it is more appropriate that He knows what is visible.

﴿and I know what you disclose﴾ that is, show openly ﴿and what you conceal﴾.

Then Allah (ﷻ) commanded them to prostrate to Adam, as a sign of honour and respect to him and as an act of obedience and worship to Allah (ﷻ). So they obeyed the command of Allah and they all hastened to prostrate, ﴿except Iblees; he refused﴾ to prostrate. He was too arrogant to obey the command of Allah and he looked down on Adam and said:

﴿...Should I prostrate before one whom You have created from clay?﴾ *(al-Isrā' 17: 61)*

This refusal and arrogance on his part stemmed from the disbelief that was a fundamental component of his character. At that point his enmity towards Allah and towards Adam, as well as his disbelief and arrogance, became clear.

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We learn several things from these verses, which confirm that Allah (ﷻ) spoke and that He still speaks; He says whatever He wills and He speaks as He wills; and He is All-Knowing, Most Wise. We also learn that if the wisdom behind some of the things that Allah creates and some of the things that He commands is hidden to us, what we must do is surrender to Him, assume that it is our reasoning that is flawed, and affirm the wisdom of Allah. In these verses, we also see how Allah cared about the angels and showed kindness to them by teaching them that which they did not know and pointing out to them that of which they were not aware.

These verses also teach us the virtue of knowledge, from several angles. For example, Allah highlighted His knowledge and wisdom to His angels, and He highlighted to them the superiority of Adam, which was based on his knowledge; knowledge is the best characteristic that a person may have; and Allah commanded the angels to prostrate to Adam as an honour to him, when his superiority in knowledge became clear to them.

From this passage we also learn that it is important to test others (by asking them questions first, before giving the answers, instead of giving away information freely); if they are unable to answer when tested, then the one who is superior in terms of knowledge should tell them. This is more effective in proving the point.

We also learn from the contrast between the fathers of humanity and of the jinn; the superiority of Adam; the way in which Allah honoured him; the enmity of Iblees towards him; and other lessons.




﴿ وَقُلْنَا يَٰٓـَٔادَمُ ٱسْكُنْ أَنتَ وَزَوْجُكَ ٱلْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَٰذِهِ
ٱلشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَأَزَلَّهُمَا ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ ﴾

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وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٣٥-٣٦)

2:35. We said: O Adam! Dwell, you and your wife in paradise; and eat freely from it wherever you may wish; but do not approach this tree, or else you will both become transgressors.

2:36. Then Shaytân made them slip from the [garden] and brought them out of the state [of felicity] they had been in. We said: Go down from here [all of you] as enemies to each other. On earth you will have an abode and your means of livelihood for a while.

When Allah created Adam and honoured him, He completed His blessing towards him by creating from him his wife (Ḥawwa'), so that he might enjoy the pleasure of living with her and so that he might enjoy her companionship, and He commanded them to dwell in paradise and eat from it in abundance and freely ﴿wherever you may wish﴾, that is, they were to eat different kinds of fruit. Allah said to him:

﴿[But] here [in paradise] it is granted to you that you will not go hungry or be naked, nor will you be thirsty here [in paradise] or suffer from the sun's heat.﴾ *(Tâ Hâ 20: 118-119)*

﴿but do not approach this tree﴾ which was one kind of the trees of paradise; Allah knows best what it was. He only forbade them to approach it as a test and trial, or for a reason that is not known to us. ﴿or else you will both become transgressors﴾. This indicates that the prohibition was in the sense of it being haram (forbidden), because it would result in transgression or wrongdoing.

But their enemy kept whispering to them and making attractive to them the idea of eating that which was forbidden to them, until he caused them to slip; in other words he made them slip by making it look good to them:

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﴿And he swore to them both [saying]: I am to you a sincere adviser.﴾ *(al-A'râf 7: 21)*

– and they were deceived by him and they obeyed him. Thus he caused them to be expelled from the state of felicity and abundance in which they had been, and to be sent down to the realm of exhaustion, striving and struggle.

﴿as enemies to each other﴾. What is meant is that Adam and his progeny would be enemies of Iblees and his progeny. It is well known that enemies strive hard to cause harm to one another and to deprive one another of good by all means. This is an implicit warning to the sons of Adam against Shayṭân, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, the Shayṭân is an enemy to you, so take him as an enemy. He only calls his followers so that they may become inhabitants of the raging fire.﴾ *(Fâṭir 35: 6)*

﴿...Will you then take him and his progeny as allies instead of Me, even though they are enemies to you? What a wretched exchange for the wrongdoers!﴾ *(al-Kahf 18: 50)*

Then Allah speaks of their destination on earth: ﴿On earth you will have an abode﴾ that is, a dwelling place
﴿and your means of livelihood for a while﴾, until the end of your allotted time, then you will move from the earth to the realm for which you were created and which was created for you. This verse tells us that the duration of this life is brief and transient. This world is not our true home; rather it is a place through which we pass and from which we seek provision to help us reach that other realm, and it is not to be regarded as our permanent abode.




﴿فَتَلَقَّىٰٓ ءَادَمُ مِن رَّبِّهِۦ كَلِمَٰتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلتَّوَّابُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ﴿٣٧﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٣٧)

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2:37. Then Adam received some words from his Lord, and He accepted his repentance, for He is the Accepter of repentance, the Most Merciful.

﴿Then Adam received some words from his Lord﴾ that is, Allah inspired him and prompted him. This refers to the words:

﴿...Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves. If You do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we will certainly be among the losers.﴾ *(al-A'râf 7: 23)*

So Adam admitted his sin and asked Allah for His forgiveness.

﴿and He﴾ that is, Allah (ﷻ)
﴿accepted his repentance﴾ and had mercy on him.
﴿For He is the Accepter of repentance﴾ for the one who turns to Him.

Allah's acceptance of repentance is indicated by two things: being guided to repent, then repentance is accepted when all its conditions are met.

﴿the Most Merciful﴾ towards His slaves. By His mercy towards them, He guides and enables them to repent, and He forgives them.

﴿قُلْنَا ٱهْبِطُوا۟ مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا ۖ فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُم مِّنِّى هُدًى فَمَن تَبِعَ هُدَاىَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ وَكَذَّبُوا۟ بِـَٔايَـٰتِنَآ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَـٰبُ ٱلنَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَـٰلِدُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٣٨-٣٩)

2:38. We said: Go down from here, all of you; then when guidance comes from Me, whosoever follows My guidance will have no fear nor will they grieve.

2:39. But those who disbelieve and reject Our signs, they shall be inhabitants of the fire; they shall abide therein forever.

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The idea of getting down is repeated as the basis for what comes next, which is the words ﴿then when guidance comes from Me﴾. In other words, whenever guidance comes from Me, O humankind and jinn; that is, a Messenger and a Book which will guide you to that which will bring you closer to Me and help you to do that which pleases Me.

﴿whosoever﴾ among you ﴿follows My guidance﴾, by believing in My Messengers and Books and following them, which means believing in everything the Messengers and Books say, obeying the commands and heeding the prohibitions

﴿will have no fear nor will they grieve﴾.

Elsewhere, Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...whoever follows My guidance will not go astray or suffer wretchedness.﴾ *(Ṭā Hā 20: 123)*

Thus, four things will result from following His guidance:

The one who does that will be safe from fear and grief. The difference between them is that if harm has already befallen a person, that causes grief, and if it is still expected (and has not yet happened), that causes fear. But here Allah tells us that the one who follows His guidance will be safe from both, and the one who is safe from both will attain the opposite, which is complete security. Similarly, Allah states that the one who follows His guidance will not go astray and will not fall into misery; again, the one who is safe from both will attain the opposite, which is guidance and happiness. So the one who follows His guidance will attain security and happiness in this world and the hereafter, and he will be protected from any negative outcomes, such as fear, grief, misguidance and misery. Thus he will attain what he is seeking, and what he fears will be warded off from him. This is the opposite of the one who does not follow His guidance, disbelieves in Him and rejects His signs.

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﴿they shall be inhabitants of the fire﴾ that is, they will be the ones who stay in it and do not depart from it
﴿they shall abide therein forever﴾; they will never come out of it, the punishment will never be reduced for them and they will never be helped.

These and similar verses indicate that creation, both humans and jinn, will be divided into two groups: those who are blessed (destined for paradise) and those who are doomed (destined for hell). These verses also describe the two groups and the deeds that may lead to that. The jinn are like humans with regard to the reward and punishment, just as they are like them with regard to commands and prohibitions.

Then Allah (ﷻ) begins to remind the Children of Israel of His favours and kindness towards them:




﴿يَٰبَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ ٱذۡكُرُواْ نِعۡمَتِيَ ٱلَّتِيٓ أَنۡعَمۡتُ عَلَيۡكُمۡ وَأَوۡفُواْ بِعَهۡدِيٓ أُوفِ بِعَهۡدِكُمۡ وَإِيَّٰيَ فَٱرۡهَبُونِ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَءَامِنُواْ بِمَآ أَنزَلۡتُ مُصَدِّقٗا لِّمَا مَعَكُمۡ وَلَا تَكُونُوٓاْ أَوَّلَ كَافِرِۭ بِهِۦۖ وَلَا تَشۡتَرُواْ بِـَٔايَٰتِي ثَمَنٗا قَلِيلٗا وَإِيَّٰيَ فَٱتَّقُونِ ﴿٤١﴾ وَلَا تَلۡبِسُواْ ٱلۡحَقَّ بِٱلۡبَٰطِلِ وَتَكۡتُمُواْ ٱلۡحَقَّ وَأَنتُمۡ تَعۡلَمُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَأَقِيمُواْ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتُواْ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَٱرۡكَعُواْ مَعَ ٱلرَّٰكِعِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾﴾

(سورة البقرة: ٤٠-٤٣)

2:40. O Children of Israel! Remember the favours which I bestowed upon you, and fulfil your covenant with Me and I shall fulfil My covenant with you, and fear none but Me.

2:41. And believe in what I have sent down, which confirms that which is [already] with you, and do not be the first to disbelieve therein or sell My revelations for a small price; and fear Me, and Me alone.

2:42. And do not confuse truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth knowingly.

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2:43. And establish prayer, give zakâh; and bow [in worship] with those who bow.

﴿O Children of Israel﴾ the name Israel here refers to Ya'qoob (ﷺ), and it is addressed to all the tribes of the Jews who were in Madinah and its environs, as well as those who would come after them. Thus Allah commanded them in general terms: ﴿Remember the favours which I bestowed upon you﴾. This includes all the favours and blessings, some of which are mentioned in this soorah. What is meant is remembering them and acknowledging them in the heart, praising Allah verbally for them and using these blessings in ways that Allah loves and is pleased with.

﴿and fulfil your covenant with Me﴾. This refers to the covenant that He made with them, that they should believe in Him and His Messengers, and establish His laws.
﴿and I shall fulfil My covenant with you﴾ which is that He will reward them for that.

What is meant by that is what Allah mentions in the following verse:

﴿Allah took a covenant from the Children of Israel, and We appointed twelve leaders from among them. And Allah said: I am with you; if you establish prayer, give zakâh, believe in My Messengers and support them, and lend to Allah a goodly loan, I will surely expiate your bad deeds for you, and admit you to gardens through which rivers flow. But if any of you, after this, disbelieves, he will indeed have strayed from the right path.﴾ *(al-Mâ'idah 5: 12)*

Then He points out the reason that should compel them to fulfil His covenant, which is fear of Him alone; for anyone who fears Him, that fear will make him obey His commands and heed His prohibitions.

Then a specific instruction is issued to them, without which their faith is not complete or valid:

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﴿And believe in what I have sent down﴾, namely the Qur'an which He sent down to His slave and Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ). Here He is commanding them to believe in it and follow it, which implies that they should also believe in the one to whom it was sent down. The motive for their belief in it is also mentioned:
﴿which confirms that which is [already] with you﴾ that is, it is in harmony with it and does not contradict it. As it is in harmony with the scriptures that you already have, and does not contradict them, then there is no reason why you should not believe in it, because it brings the same message as all the Messengers brought. So it is more appropriate that you should believe in it, because you are the people of scriptures and knowledge.

Moreover, the words ﴿which confirms that which is [already] with you﴾ indicate that if you do not believe in it, that will backfire on you and will imply that you have rejected the scriptures that you already have, because the message it brings is the same as that which was bought by Moosâ, 'Eesâ and other Prophets. So by rejecting it, you are also rejecting what you have with you.

Furthermore, in the scriptures that you have with you, there is a description and foretelling of this Prophet (ﷺ) who has brought this Qur'an. Hence if you do not believe in him, then you will have rejected some of that which was revealed to you, and the one who rejects some of that which has been revealed to him has in fact rejected all of it, just as the one who disbelieves in one message has in fact disbelieved in all of them.

When Allah commanded them to believe in the Qur'an, He also forbade and warned them against the opposite, which is disbelief in it, as He says: ﴿and do not be the first to disbelieve therein﴾ that is, in the Qur'an and the Messenger (ﷺ).

The phrase ﴿the first to disbelieve therein﴾ is more eloquent than telling them, do not disbelieve in it, because if they were the first to disbelieve in it, that would mean that they were hastening to disbelieve

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in it, which is the opposite of what is expected from them; thus their sin and the sins of those who follow their example after them will be upon them.

Then Allah mentions that which is preventing them from believing, which is their preferring immediate worldly gains over eternal bliss. Allah says: ﴿do not...sell My revelations for a small price﴾. That price is what they gain of (worldly) status and accumulation which they think will cease if they believe in Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), so they trade the verses of Allah for those things, preferring them and giving precedence to them.

﴿and fear Me, and Me alone﴾ that is, none other than Me. If you fear Allah alone, your fear of Him dictates that you should give precedence to belief in His revelations over that small gain, just as choosing the small gain (instead of faith) is indicative of the absence of fear of Allah in your hearts.

Then Allah says: ﴿And do not confuse﴾ that is, mix, ﴿truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth knowingly﴾. Here Allah is forbidding two things to them: mixing truth with falsehood, and concealing the truth. That is because what is expected of the people of scriptures and knowledge is that they should distinguish between truth and falsehood and propagate the truth, so that people might be guided thereby, those who have gone astray might be brought back, and proof might be established against those who stubbornly reject faith, because Allah has made His revelations clear and has clarified His evidence, so as to distinguish truth from falsehood and to distinguish the path of those who are guided from the path of the evildoers. Any of the people of knowledge who acts upon that is one of the successors of the Messengers and is one of those who lead the people to guidance.

The one who confuses truth with falsehood, not distinguishing between them, and knowingly conceals the truth that he knows and is enjoined to disclose openly, is one of the callers to hell, because with

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regard to matters of religion, the people only follow their scholars. So choose for yourself one of these two options.

Then He says ﴿And establish prayer﴾ that is, performing the physical movements properly, with focus and presence of mind ﴿give zakâh﴾ to those who are entitled to receive it ﴿and bow [in worship] with those who bow﴾ that is, pray with those who pray. If you do that, whilst believing in the Messengers and revelations of Allah, then you will have combined both visible and hidden actions, joining sincerity towards Allah with kindness towards His slaves, and combining acts of worship in the heart with physical and financial acts of worship.

﴿and bow [in worship] with those who bow﴾ that is, pray with those who pray. This is a command which indicates that it is obligatory to pray in congregation and that bowing is one of the pillars or essential parts of the prayer. Here prayer is referred to as bowing; when an act of worship is referred to by one of its parts, this indicates that that part of the act of worship is obligatory.

﴿ أَتَأْمُرُونَ ٱلنَّاسَ بِٱلْبِرِّ وَتَنسَوْنَ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ تَتْلُونَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ ۚ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٤٤)

2:44. Do you enjoin righteousness upon people while you ignore your own selves, even though you study the scripture? Will you not understand?

﴿Do you enjoin righteousness upon people﴾ that is, do you tell them to believe and do good ﴿while you ignore your own selves﴾ that is, you do not remind yourselves to do that, at the time when

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﴿you study the scripture? Will you not understand?﴾. The root meaning of the word *'aql* (reasoning or understanding) is to make a person understand that which will benefit him and restrain him from doing that which will harm him. Reason encourages the individual to be the first one to do what he tells others to do, and the first one to refrain from what he tells others not to do. If a person tells others to do good but does not do it himself, and he tells them not to commit evil but does not refrain from it himself, that indicates that he in fact has no understanding and is ignorant, especially if he does that knowingly. Thus proof is established against him.

Although this verse was revealed concerning the Children of Israel, it is general in meaning and applies to everyone, because Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe, why do you say that which you do not do? It is most loathsome to Allah that you say that which you do not do.﴾ *(as-Saff 61: 2-3)*

There is nothing in the verse to indicate that if a person does not do what he is enjoining others to do, then he should give up enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, because it is well known that the individual has two duties: enjoining (what is good) and forbidding (what is evil) to others, and doing likewise for himself. The fact that he gives up doing one of them does not mean that he has a concession allowing him to give up the other. Perfection is attained when the individual does both duties, and the worst-case scenario is when he gives up both. As for doing one of them and not the other, it is not as good as the former, but it is not as bad as the latter. Moreover, it is human nature that people do not follow those whose deeds contradict their words; deeds are more likely to be heeded and emulated than mere words.

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﴿وَٱسْتَعِينُوا۟ بِٱلصَّبْرِ وَٱلصَّلَوٰةِ ۚ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى ٱلْخَٰشِعِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُم مُّلَٰقُوا۟ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ رَٰجِعُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ يَٰبَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ ٱذْكُرُوا۟ نِعْمَتِىَ ٱلَّتِىٓ أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّى فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ يَوْمًا لَّا تَجْزِى نَفْسٌ عَن نَّفْسٍ شَيْـًٔا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَٰعَةٌ وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٤٥-٤٨)

2:45. Seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed it is hard, except for the humble,

2:46. Who are certain that they are going to meet their Lord, and that to Him they will return.

2:47. O Children of Israel! Remember the blessings which I bestowed upon you and how I favoured you above all other people.

2:48. Then guard yourselves against a day when no soul shall avail another at all and neither intercession nor ransom will be accepted from it, nor will they be helped.

Here, Allah commands them to seek help in their affairs by being patient in all situations. That means being patient in obeying Allah so that one may fulfil one's obligations properly, and being patient in refraining from disobedience, so that one may be able to keep away from it altogether. It also includes patience in accepting the decree of Allah when it is painful, so as to avoid becoming angry or discontented with it. Having patience and compelling oneself to do what Allah has enjoined is a great help in all situations. As a person strives to be patient, Allah will grant him patience. That also applies to prayer, which is the foundation of faith and keeps one from committing shameful and evil deeds. By means of prayer, a person may seek help in all his affairs.

﴿Indeed it﴾ that is, prayer ﴿is hard﴾ that is, difficult ﴿except for the humble﴾. It is easy and light for them, because humility, fear of

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Allah and hope for that which is with Him makes them do it happily, because they have the hope of reward and the fear of punishment. This is unlike the one who is not like that, for he has no motivation to do it, and if he does do it, it is one of the most burdensome of things for him.

Humility means submission of the heart, being tranquil and turning to Allah (ﷻ), expressing one's utter need of Him, having faith in Him and believing in the meeting with Him.

Hence He says: ﴿Who are certain that they are going to meet their Lord﴾, and He will requite them for their deeds ﴿and that to Him they will return﴾. This belief is what makes acts of worship easier for them, gives them consolation at the time of calamity, raises their spirits at the time of crisis and deters them from doing bad deeds. They are the ones who will find eternal bliss in paradise. As for the one who does not believe in the meeting with his Lord, prayer and other acts of worship are among the most difficult things for him.

Then Allah again reminds the Children of Israel of His blessings, as an exhortation and warning, and He instils in them fear of the Day of Resurrection, ﴿when no soul﴾, even if it is one of the noble souls, such as the Prophets and the righteous, ﴿shall avail﴾ that is, be able to help ﴿another﴾, even if the latter is the closest of family members ﴿at all﴾ in any way, great or small; rather the only thing that will benefit an individual is righteous deeds that he sent on ahead.

﴿and neither intercession nor ransom will be accepted from it﴾ that is, that soul will not be able to intercede for anyone without the permission of Allah and His approval of the one for whom intercession is sought, for Allah does not accept any deed except that which is intended for His sake and is in accordance with the straight path and the Sunnah. And no ransom will be accepted either:

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﴿If the wrongdoers had everything on earth, and as much again with it, they would offer it to ransom themselves from the terrible punishment on the Day of Resurrection...﴾ *(az-Zumar 39: 47)*

But that will not be accepted from them, ﴿nor will they be helped﴾ that is, no harm will be warded off from them. This highlights the fact that there will be no benefit from any created being in any way. The words ﴿no soul shall avail another at all﴾ have to do with obtaining benefits, and the words ﴿nor will they be helped﴾ have to do with warding off harm.

﴿neither intercession nor ransom will be accepted from it﴾ – there will be no benefit from anyone that a person could seek in return for something, such as a ransom or intercession. This makes a person cut off any attachment to created beings, because he knows that they cannot bring him the slightest benefit; and it makes him put all his trust in Allah, Who is the One Who brings benefits and wards off harm; so he should worship Him alone, with no partner or associate, and seek His help in worshipping Him.

 

﴿وَإِذْ نَجَّيْنَٰكُم مِّنْ ءَالِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوٓءَ ٱلْعَذَابِ يُذَبِّحُونَ أَبْنَآءَكُمْ
وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَآءَكُمْ ۚ وَفِى ذَٰلِكُم بَلَآءٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمُ ٱلْبَحْرَ
فَأَنجَيْنَٰكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَآ ءَالَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنتُمْ تَنظُرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَإِذْ وَٰعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰٓ أَرْبَعِينَ
لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ ٱتَّخَذْتُمُ ٱلْعِجْلَ مِنۢ بَعْدِهِۦ وَأَنتُمْ ظَٰلِمُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنكُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ
ذَٰلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَإِذْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ
﴿٥٣﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِۦ يَٰقَوْمِ إِنَّكُمْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنفُسَكُم بِٱتِّخَاذِكُمُ ٱلْعِجْلَ
فَتُوبُوٓا۟ إِلَىٰ بَارِئِكُمْ فَٱقْتُلُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَكُمْ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ عِندَ بَارِئِكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ
ٱلتَّوَّابُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَٰمُوسَىٰ لَن نُّؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ نَرَى ٱللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْكُمُ

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ٱلصَّٰعِقَةُ وَأَنتُمْ تَنظُرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَٰكُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْغَمَامَ وَأَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْمَنَّ وَٱلسَّلْوَىٰ ۖ كُلُوا۟ مِن طَيِّبَٰتِ مَا رَزَقْنَٰكُمْ ۖ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلَٰكِن كَانُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٤٩-٥٧)

2:49. And [remember] when We delivered you from the people of Pharaoh, who were subjecting you to grievous torment, slaughtering your sons and letting your womenfolk live; in that was a great trial from your Lord.

2:50. And [remember] when We parted the sea for you and saved you while We drowned Pharaoh's people while you were looking on.

2:51. And [remember] when We appointed for Moosâ forty nights, and in his absence you took the calf [for worship], and thus became transgressors.

2:52. Yet, even after that We forgave you, so that you might be grateful.

2:53. And [remember] when We gave Moosâ the scripture and the criterion [between right and wrong] so that you might be guided aright.

2:54. And [remember] when Moosâ said to his people: O my people! You have indeed wronged yourselves by taking the calf [for worship]. So repent to your Maker, and kill [the guilty ones among] you; that will be best for you with your Maker. Then He accepted your repentance, for He is the Accepter of repentance, the Most Merciful.

2:55. And [remember] when you said: O Moosâ! We will never believe in you until we see Allah with our own eyes, but a thunderbolt struck you while you were looking on.

2:56. Then We brought you back to life after your death, so that you might be grateful.

2:57. And We shaded you with clouds and sent down to you manna and quails, saying: Eat of the good things We have provided for

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you. Indeed, they did not wrong Us; rather they wronged their own souls.

This is the beginning of a detailed list of Allah's blessings to the Children of Israel:

﴿And [remember] when We delivered you from the people of Pharaoh﴾ that is, from Pharaoh and his people and troops, who prior to that had been ﴿subjecting you﴾ that is, they had been using and abusing them
﴿to grievous torment﴾ that is, the harshest possible torment
﴿slaughtering your sons﴾ for fear of your numbers increasing
﴿and letting your womenfolk live﴾ that is, not killing them; thus you were caught between being slain or being subject to hard labour, left alive as if a favour was being done to you by the people who looked down at you, which is the ultimate humiliation. But Allah blessed them by saving them completely and drowning their enemy while they were looking on, so that they might rejoice.

﴿in that﴾ that is, in saving you (from Pharaoh)
﴿was a great trial﴾ that is, a test
﴿from your Lord﴾. This is one of the things that require you to give thanks to Him and to obey His commands.

Then Allah mentions His blessing to them when He appointed for Moosâ forty nights in order to send down to him the Torah which was filled with great blessings and benefits, but they could not wait until the completion of that appointed time; rather they began worshipping the calf in his absence.

﴿and thus became transgressors﴾, fully aware of your transgression, as proof had already been established against you, which made it a greater offence and a more grievous sin. Then Allah commanded you on the lips of His Prophet Moosâ to repent, and to kill the guilty ones

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among you, after which Allah forgave you because of that, ﴿so that you might be grateful﴾ to Allah.

﴿And [remember] when you said: O Moosâ! We will never believe in you until we see Allah with our own eyes﴾. This was the utmost transgression and audacity towards Allah and towards His Messenger (ﷺ).

﴿but a thunderbolt﴾ that is, either death or deep unconsciousness ﴿struck you while you were looking on﴾ – that happened when you were all looking at one another.

﴿Then We brought you back to life after your death, so that you might be grateful﴾.

Then Allah mentions His favours to you when you were wandering in the wilderness, as He bestowed upon you shade and ample provision: ﴿And We shaded you with clouds and sent down to you manna﴾. Manna is a generic word that applies to all kinds of provision that are acquired without effort, such as ginger, truffles and so on.

﴿and quails﴾. The quail is a small bird, the flesh of which is palatable. The manna and quails would come down to them in sufficient quantities to nourish them.

﴿Eat of the good things We have provided for you﴾ that is, provision the like of which even those who dwell in cities and live a life of luxury do not have. But they were not grateful for this blessing, and they continued to be hardhearted and to commit many sins.

﴿Indeed, they did not wrong Us﴾ by doing these deeds that were contrary to Our commands, for Allah is not harmed by the disobedience of those who disobey Him, just as He does not benefit from the obedience of those who obey Him.

﴿rather they wronged their own souls﴾ because the harm of those actions came back to them.

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﴿وَإِذْ قُلْنَا ٱدْخُلُوا۟ هَٰذِهِ ٱلْقَرْيَةَ فَكُلُوا۟ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَدًا وَٱدْخُلُوا۟ ٱلْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُولُوا۟ حِطَّةٌ نَّغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطَٰيَٰكُمْ ۚ وَسَنَزِيدُ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾ فَبَدَّلَ ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا۟ قَوْلًا غَيْرَ ٱلَّذِى قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَنزَلْنَا عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا۟ رِجْزًا مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ بِمَا كَانُوا۟ يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٥٨-٥٩)

2:58. And [remember] when We said: Go into this town, and eat freely from it wherever you may wish; but enter the gate bowing down [with humility] and say: Relieve us [from the burden of our sins]. We will forgive you your sins and increase [the reward] of those who do good.

2:59. But the wrongdoers changed the word to something other than what they had been told; so We sent down upon the wrongdoers a plague from heaven, because of their defiant disobedience.

This is a further part of the blessings that Allah bestowed upon them after they had disobeyed Him. He commanded them to enter a town, which would become a place where they could settle and live a life of dignity, and in which they would have abundant provision. But they were to enter it showing humility towards Allah in their actions, by entering the gate ﴿bowing down [with humility]﴾, and in their words, by saying: ﴿Relieve us [from the burden of our sins]﴾, asking Allah to relieve them of their sins by virtue of their asking Him for His forgiveness.

﴿We will forgive you your sins﴾ by virtue of your asking for forgiveness

﴿and increase [the reward] of those who do good﴾ by virtue of their good deeds, by granting them reward in this world and in the hereafter

﴿But the wrongdoers changed the word﴾ that is, the wrongdoers among them. This means that not all of them did this, because not all of them changed the word.

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﴿to something other than what they had been told﴾. So instead of saying *ḥiṭṭatun* ﴿Relieve us [from the burden of our sins]﴾, they said *ḥabbah fee ḥinṭah* (a grain of wheat), making fun of and mocking the command of Allah. Since they changed the word, even though it was easy for them to say it, it is more likely that they changed the actions required of them. Hence they entered the gate shuffling on their bottoms. Furthermore, since this transgression was the greatest reason for the punishment that befell them, Allah said: ﴿so We sent down upon the wrongdoers﴾ among them ﴿a plague﴾ that is, a punishment ﴿from heaven, because of their defiant disobedience﴾ that is, because of their evildoing and transgression.

 

﴿ ۞ وَإِذِ ٱسْتَسْقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِۦ فَقُلْنَا ٱضْرِب بِّعَصَاكَ ٱلْحَجَرَ ۖ فَٱنفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ ٱثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا ۖ قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ مَّشْرَبَهُمْ ۖ كُلُوا۟ وَٱشْرَبُوا۟ مِن رِّزْقِ ٱللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا۟ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٦٠)

2:60. And [remember] when Moosâ prayed for water for his people; We said: Strike the rock with your staff. Then twelve springs gushed forth from it and each tribe knew its own drinking place. So eat and drink of the sustenance provided by Allah, and do not strive to spread mischief in the land.

Moosâ prayed for water from which they could drink.

﴿We said: Strike the rock with your staff.﴾ This refers either to a specific rock that was known to him, or to any rock.

﴿Then twelve springs gushed forth from it﴾; the number of Israelite tribes was twelve.

﴿and each tribe﴾ among them ﴿knew its own drinking place﴾ among these springs, so that there would be no pushing and shoving; rather they would be able to drink easily, without any disturbance. Hence

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Allah said: ﴿So eat and drink of the sustenance provided by Allah﴾, meaning that which comes to you without any effort on your part, ﴿and do not strive to spread mischief in the land﴾ that is, do not try to cause ruin and spread mischief.




﴿وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَٰمُوسَىٰ لَن نَّصْبِرَ عَلَىٰ طَعَامٍ وَٰحِدٍ فَٱدْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُخْرِجْ لَنَا مِمَّا تُنۢبِتُ ٱلْأَرْضُ مِنۢ بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَّآئِهَا وَفُومِهَا وَعَدَسِهَا وَبَصَلِهَا ۖ قَالَ أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ ٱلَّذِى هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ بِٱلَّذِى هُوَ خَيْرٌ ۚ ٱهْبِطُوا۟ مِصْرًا فَإِنَّ لَكُم مَّا سَأَلْتُمْ ۗ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلذِّلَّةُ وَٱلْمَسْكَنَةُ وَبَآءُو بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا۟ يَكْفُرُونَ بِـَٔايَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ ٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ بِغَيْرِ ٱلْحَقِّ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوا۟ وَّكَانُوا۟ يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿٦١﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٦١)

2:61. And [remember] when you said: O Moosâ! We cannot bear to eat only one kind of food; so pray to your Lord for us to bring forth for us of what the earth produces, its herbs, cucumbers, garlic, lentils and onions. He said: Would you exchange that which is better for that which is inferior? Go down to any town, and you will find what you want! They were struck with humiliation and wretchedness; they incurred the wrath of Allah. That was because they rejected the signs of Allah and killed the Prophets unjustly. That was because of their disobedience and transgression.

What is meant is: remember when you said to Moosâ, by way of expressing boredom with the blessings of Allah and scorning them: ﴿O Moosâ! We cannot bear to eat only one kind of food﴾. Although, as we stated above, there were different types of food, the variety was limited.

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﴿so pray to your Lord for us to bring forth for us of what the earth produces, its herbs﴾ – the word translated here as ﴿herbs﴾ refers to plants other than trees – ﴿cucumbers, garlic, lentils and onions﴾. Moosâ said to them: ﴿Would you exchange that which is better﴾ namely the manna and quails ﴿for that which is inferior﴾ namely the foods mentioned; this is not befitting for you, because the foods you are asking for can be found in any town that you go down to. As for the food with which Allah has blessed you, it is the best and finest of food, so how can you ask for something else in its stead?

Since their behaviour was the greatest evidence of their lack of patience and their scorning the commands and blessings of Allah, He gave them an appropriate punishment, as He said: ﴿They were struck with humiliation﴾ that could be seen in their physical appearance, and ﴿wretchedness﴾ in their hearts, so that they had no self-respect or high ambitions; rather their souls were low and vile, and their aspirations were the worst of aspirations. ﴿they incurred the wrath of Allah﴾ that is, they did not gain anything but the wrath of Allah; what a bad return, and what a bad situation they found themselves in.

﴿That﴾ – the reason why they deserved His wrath – ﴿was because they rejected the signs of Allah﴾ that pointed to the truth. When they rejected His signs, He punished them by becoming angry with them. That was also because they ﴿killed the Prophets unjustly﴾.

Allah says ﴿unjustly﴾ to emphasise the abhorrent nature of the crime; otherwise it is well known that killing a Prophet can never be just or lawful. It also indicates that no one should think that they were ignorant or lacking in knowledge.

﴿That was because of their disobedience﴾ in committing sin ﴿and transgression﴾ against the slaves of Allah. One sin leads to another: negligence leads to minor sin, from which stems major sin, which in turn leads to various kinds of innovation, disbelief and so on. We ask Allah to keep us safe and sound from all trials.

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These verses are addressed to the Israelite community that existed at the time when the Qur'an was revealed; the deeds referred to were committed by their forebears, but were attributed to them for several reasons, such as the following:

- They used to boast about and praise themselves, claiming that they were superior to Muhammad (ﷺ) and those who believed in him. By referring to the attitude of their predecessors, which was well known to them, Allah explained to each of them that they were not people of patience, high morals or good deeds. If this is how their ancestors were, when it is expected that the ancestors would be of a higher status and had a better attitude than those who came after them, then how about those who are addressed here?
- The blessings of Allah that were bestowed upon their predecessors also reached the later generations; a blessing for the fathers is also a blessing for the sons, which is why they are addressed here, because they were also included in the blessing.
- It is addressed to them as if they were the ones who did those deeds, which indicates that members of a community that follows one religion support one another and help one another with regard to that which serves the common interest, so that it is as if the earlier and later generations all lived at the same time. The action of one of them is like the action of all of them, because what some of them do of good deeds will benefit all of them, and what some of them do of evil deeds will bring harm to all of them.
- The latter generation did not denounce most of their predecessors' deeds, and the one who approves of sin is a partner in it.

And there are other reasons which are known only to Allah.

Then Allah (ﷻ) says, differentiating between various groups of the People of the Book:

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﴿إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَٱلَّذِينَ هَادُوا۟ وَٱلنَّصَٰرَىٰ وَٱلصَّٰبِـِٔينَ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْـَٔاخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٦٢)

2:62. Those who believe [in the Prophet], and those who are Jews, and the Christians and the Sabians – whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, and does righteous deeds, will have their reward with their Lord; they will have no fear, nor will they grieve.

This ruling applies to the People of the Book only, because the Sabians, according to the correct view, are one of the Christian sects. Here Allah tells us that the believers of this Ummah, and those among the Jews, Christians and Sabians, who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and believe in their Messengers, will have a great reward and well-being; they will have no fear nor will they grieve. As for those among these communities who disbelieve in Allah, His Messengers and the Last Day, they will be in the opposite state, that of fear and grief.

The correct view is that this ruling applies to these groups as they were, and it does not refer to believing in Muhammad (ﷺ), as it speaks of them at a time before the mission of Muhammad (ﷺ) began, and this is how they were then. This is how it is with the Qur'an: if some people find that some verses are not clear to them, they have to look for others that will clarify the matter, because it is a Revelation from One Who knows all things before they happen, and Whose mercy encompasses all things. The way in which this may be clarified – and Allah knows best – is that when the Qur'an mentions the Children of Israel and criticises them for their sins and abhorrent deeds, that may give the impression that all of the Israelites are subject to this condemnation. Hence the Creator (ﷻ) highlighted those who

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were not subject to this condemnation by referring to those others (who were not subject to it). As He mentioned the Children of Israel in particular, this may give the impression that this ruling applies to them only; hence Allah (ﷻ) mentioned the general ruling that applies to all these other groups, so as to clarify the truth and dispel confusion and doubt. Glory be to the One Who has included in His Book that which dazzles the minds of those who have knowledge.

Then Allah (ﷻ) goes back to rebuking the Children of Israel for what their predecessors did:



﴿وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَٰقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ ٱلطُّورَ خُذُوا۟ مَآ ءَاتَيْنَٰكُم بِقُوَّةٍ وَٱذْكُرُوا۟ مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ ۖ فَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُۥ لَكُنتُم مِّنَ ٱلْخَٰسِرِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٦٣-٦٤)

2:63. And [remember] when We made a covenant with you and We raised the Mount above you, [saying]: Hold fast to what We have given you and bear in mind what is in it, so that you may become pious.

2:64. But after that you turned away, and were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah to you, you certainly would have been among the losers.

That is, remember ﴿when We made a covenant with you﴾. This refers to a solemn pledge, which is further emphasised by the fearful event of the raising of the Mount above them. It was said to them: ﴿Hold fast﴾ that is, with determination, effort and patience in obeying Allah ﴿to what We have given you﴾ of the Torah ﴿and bear in mind what is in it﴾ that is, what is in your Book, by reciting it and learning it, ﴿so that you may become pious﴾, fearing the punishment and wrath of Allah.

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But after this emphasis on the pledge, ﴿you turned away﴾, which made it inevitable that the severest of penalties should befall you, ﴿and were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah to you, you certainly would have been among the losers﴾.




﴿وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱعْتَدَوْا۟ مِنكُمْ فِى ٱلسَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا۟ قِرَدَةً خَٰسِـِٔينَ ﴿٦٥﴾ فَجَعَلْنَٰهَا نَكَٰلًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهَا وَمَا خَلْفَهَا وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٦٥-٦٦)

2:65. And you certainly know those amongst you who broke the Sabbath, whereupon We said to them: Be apes, despised and rejected.

2:66. So We made their fate an example to their own generation and to those who came after them, and a lesson to those who fear Allah.

That is, the situation of ﴿those amongst you who broke the Sabbath﴾ is something with which you are very familiar. They are the ones whose story is told in detail in Soorat al-A'râf, where Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Ask them about the town which was by the sea and how they broke the Sabbath...﴾ *(al-A'râf 7: 163)*

Because of this grave sin, they deserved the wrath of Allah and the punishment of being turned into ﴿apes, despised and rejected﴾ that is, disdained and humiliated.

Allah made this punishment ﴿an example to their own generation﴾ that is, the nations that witnessed it and those whom the news reached at that time

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﴿and to those who came after them﴾. Thus proof was established against people; this story also serves to deter people from disobeying Allah. But it is not a beneficial lesson for anyone except those who fear Allah; others do not benefit from His signs.




﴿ وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِۦٓ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَن تَذْبَحُوا۟ بَقَرَةً ۖ قَالُوٓا۟ أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُوًا ۖ قَالَ
أَعُوذُ بِٱللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ ٱلْجَٰهِلِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ قَالُوا۟ ٱدْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّن لَّنَا مَا هِىَ ۚ قَالَ إِنَّهُۥ
يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لَّا فَارِضٌ وَلَا بِكْرٌ عَوَانٌۢ بَيْنَ ذَٰلِكَ ۖ فَٱفْعَلُوا۟ مَا تُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾
قَالُوا۟ ٱدْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّن لَّنَا مَا لَوْنُهَا ۚ قَالَ إِنَّهُۥ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ صَفْرَآءُ
فَاقِعٌ لَّوْنُهَا تَسُرُّ ٱلنَّٰظِرِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾ قَالُوا۟ ٱدْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّن لَّنَا مَا هِىَ إِنَّ ٱلْبَقَرَ تَشَٰبَهَ
عَلَيْنَا ۖ وَإِنَّآ إِن شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالَ إِنَّهُۥ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لَّا ذَلُولٌ تُثِيرُ ٱلْأَرْضَ
وَلَا تَسْقِى ٱلْحَرْثَ مُسَلَّمَةٌ لَّا شِيَةَ فِيهَا ۚ قَالُوا۟ ٱلْـَٰٔنَ جِئْتَ بِٱلْحَقِّ ۚ فَذَبَحُوهَا وَمَا كَادُوا
يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَٱدَّٰرَأْتُمْ فِيهَا ۖ وَٱللَّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا كُنتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَقُلْنَا
ٱضْرِبُوهُ بِبَعْضِهَا ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ يُحْىِ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمَوْتَىٰ وَيُرِيكُمْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾ ثُمَّ
قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ فَهِىَ كَٱلْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً ۚ وَإِنَّ مِنَ ٱلْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ
مِنْهُ ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ ۚ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشَّقَّقُ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ ٱلْمَآءُ ۚ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ
ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَٰفِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٦٧-٧٤)

2:67. And [remember] when Moosâ said to his people: Allah commands you to sacrifice a cow. They said: Are you mocking us? He said: Allah forbid that I should be so ignorant!

2:68. They said: Pray to your Lord to make clear to us what [sort of cow] it should be. He said: He [Allah] says: The cow should be neither too old nor too young, but somewhere in between. Now do as you are commanded!

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2:69. They said: Pray to your Lord to make clear to us what her colour should be. He said: He [Allah] says: A yellow cow, pure and rich in colour, pleasing to the beholder.

2:70. They said: Pray to your Lord to make clear to us [exactly] what she is, because to us all cows look alike. And surely, if Allah wills, we will be guided.

2:71. He said: He [Allah] says: A cow not broken in to till the earth or water the fields; sound and whole, without blemish. They said: Now you have brought the truth. Then they offered her in sacrifice, although they almost failed to do so.

2:72. And [remember] when you killed a man and disputed among yourselves concerning [the crime], but Allah brought forth that which you were concealing.

2:73. So We said: Strike the [body] with a piece of the [sacrificed cow]. Thus Allah brings the dead to life and shows you His signs, that you may understand.

2:74. Then after that, your hearts were hardened, and became like a rock or even harder. For among rocks there are some from which rivers spring forth; others which, when they cleave asunder, send forth water; and others which tumble down for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.

That is, remember what happened to you with Moosâ, when you killed a man and disputed amongst yourselves concerning the crime. In other words, you argued as to who killed him, until the matter nearly got out of hand and almost – were it not for Allah guiding you – resulted in great turmoil amongst you. Then Moosâ told you how to find out about the murderer: Slaughter a cow. You should have hastened to obey his orders and should not have objected to them, but you insisted on objecting, and said: ﴿Are you mocking us?﴾. The Prophet of Allah said: ﴿Allah forbid that I should be so ignorant!﴾ The ignorant man is the one who speaks nonsense, in

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which there is no benefit, and he is the one who mocks people. The wise man, on the other hand, thinks that one of the greatest shameful acts that undermine one's religious commitment and rational thinking is mocking a person who is a human being like him; even if he is superior to him, that superiority requires him to show gratitude to his Lord and compassion towards His slaves.

When Moosâ said that to them, they realised that he was speaking the truth, and said: ﴿Pray to your Lord to make clear to us what [sort of cow] it should be﴾; how old should it be? ﴿He said: He [Allah] says: The cow should be neither too old nor too young, but somewhere in between. Now do as you are commanded!﴾ – and stop confusing the matter with so many questions.

﴿They said: Pray to your Lord to make clear to us what her colour should be. He said: He [Allah] says: A yellow cow, pure and rich in colour﴾ that is, of a deep colour ﴿pleasing to the beholder﴾ with its beauty.

﴿They said: Pray to your Lord to make clear to us [exactly] what she is, because to us all cows look alike﴾, and we still do not know what you want. ﴿And surely, if Allah wills, we will be guided﴾.

﴿He said: He [Allah] says: A cow not broken in﴾ that is, trained ﴿to till the earth﴾ by ploughing ﴿or water the fields﴾ that is, she is not used for the purpose of irrigation; ﴿sound and whole﴾ that is, free of defects and not having been used for work; ﴿without blemish﴾ that is, there are no patches of any colour other than what was mentioned above. ﴿They said: Now you have brought the truth﴾ that is, now you have brought us a clear explanation. They said this because of their ignorance, for the truth had come to them from the outset. If they had gone and fetched any cow, they would have done what they were meant to do, but they made it difficult for themselves by asking too many questions, so Allah made it difficult for them. If they had not said ﴿if Allah wills﴾, they would not have been guided concerning this matter. ﴿Then they offered her﴾ that is, the cow that

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met that description ﴿in sacrifice, although they almost failed to do so﴾ because of their asking too many questions.

When they had slaughtered her, [Allah] said: ﴿Strike﴾ the slain man with part of her, either a specific part or any part of the cow's body. There is no benefit in specifying which part it was. So they struck him with part of the cow, and Allah brought him back to life and disclosed what they were concealing, as he identified his killer. His being brought back to life whilst they were watching was a sign that Allah can bring the dead back to life, ﴿that you may understand﴾ and be deterred from doing that which will cause you harm.

﴿Then after that, your hearts were hardened﴾ that is, they became harsh and rough, unable to benefit from any exhortation. ﴿Then after that﴾ means, after Allah bestowed upon you great blessings and showed you His signs, after which your hearts should not have become hard, because what you had seen should have softened your hearts and made them humble. Then Allah describes their hardheartedness as being ﴿like a rock﴾, which is harder than iron, because iron and lead melt when they are exposed to fire, but rocks do not melt.

﴿or even harder﴾ means, not less hard than rocks. Then Allah describes how rocks are better than their hearts, as He says: ﴿For among rocks there are some from which rivers spring forth; others which, when they cleave asunder, send forth water; and others which tumble down for fear of Allah﴾. In these ways rocks are superior to their hearts. Then He issues a sterner warning, and says: ﴿And Allah is not unaware of what you do﴾; rather He knows and keeps a record of all your deeds, great and small, and He will requite you for them in the fullest manner.

It should be noted that many of the commentators (may Allah have mercy on them) went to great lengths in filling their books with the stories taken from Jewish sources, and they tried to interpret the verses of the Qur'an in the light of these stories, making them like a

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commentary for the Book of Allah. They gave as evidence for their action the hadith in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said:
«Narrate from the Children of Israel, and it does not matter.» (Bukhari)

What I think is that even if it is permissible to narrate their stories and reports, that is only to be done in isolation, not in the context of discussing the meanings of Qur'an or any issue of Sharia. It is not permissible to make them a means of interpreting the Book of Allah at all, unless it is proven to be soundly narrated from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). That is because the status of these stories and reports is reflected in the hadith:
«Do not believe the People of the Book and do not disbelieve them.» (Bukhari)

As their status is somewhat dubious, and it is well known in Islam that we must believe in the Qur'an and be certain about its wording and its meanings, it is not permissible for us to use these stories, which were transmitted by unknown narrators in reports that in most, if not all, cases are most likely to be lies, to explain the meanings of the Qur'an in a definitive manner and without doubting them. In fact it is because of heedlessness regarding this issue that what happened came to pass. And Allah is the source of strength.

﴿ أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَن يُؤْمِنُوا لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُ مِن بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ قَالُوا أَتُحَدِّثُونَهُم بِمَا فَتَحَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لِيُحَاجُّوكُم بِهِ عِندَ رَبِّكُمْ ۚ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ أَوَلَا يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُّونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا أَمَانِيَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٧٥-٧٨)

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2:75. Do you [O believers] then hope that they will respond to your call, when a party among them used to hear the word of Allah, and they distorted it knowingly after having understood it?

2:76. When they meet the believers, they say: We [too] believe: But when they meet one another in private, they say: Why are you telling them what Allah has disclosed to you [of the description of the Prophet in the Torah], that they may use it in argument against you before your Lord? Have you no sense?

2:77. Do they not realise that Allah knows what they conceal and what they disclose?

2:78. And there are among them unlettered people, who have no knowledge of the Book, except wishful thinking, and they have nothing but [mere] speculation.

These verses put an end to the believers' hopes that the People of the Book would believe. In other words, do not raise your hopes about them becoming believers, because the way they are does not give rise to any such hope. They used to distort the words of Allah after having learned and understood them; they interpreted them in a way different than what Allah intended, in order to give people the impression that it came from Allah, when it did not come from Allah. If this is how they are with regard to their own Book, which they regard as a source of great pride and honour, and as the basis of their religion, yet they took it as a means to turn people away from the path of Allah, then how can it be hoped that they would believe and respond to your call? That is highly unlikely.

Then Allah describes the condition of the hypocrites among the People of the Book:

﴿When they meet the believers, they say: We [too] believe﴾. They pretended to be believers and they paid lip service to a faith that was not in their hearts

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﴿But when they meet one another in private﴾ and no one else is present other than their co-religionists, they say to one another: ﴿Why are you telling them what Allah has disclosed to you [of the description of the Prophet in the Torah]﴾ that is, why do you pretend to believe and tell them that you are like them, when that will be proof for them against you, because they will say: They affirmed that what we are following is truth and what they are following is falsehood. Thus they (the believers) will use that against you before your Lord. ﴿Have you no sense?﴾ That is, do you not have the sense to stop doing that which may be used against you? This is what they say to one another.

﴿Do they not realise that Allah knows what they conceal and what they disclose?﴾ So even though they concealed what they believed and kept it to themselves, and thought that by being discreet they would be able to avoid giving the believers any argument to use against them, they were wrong and very ignorant, for Allah knew what they concealed and what they disclosed, so He exposed their true nature to His slaves.

﴿And there are among them﴾ that is, among the People of the Book ﴿unlettered people﴾ that is, common folk who are not knowledgeable ﴿who have no knowledge of the Book, except wishful thinking﴾ that is, they have no share of the Book of Allah except recitation that they hear; they know nothing about what the early generations had of true knowledge of it. All these people have is some speculative ideas and they blindly follow the scholars among them.

In these verses, Allah mentions their scholars, common folk, hypocrites and those among them who were not hypocrites. The scholars among them were adhering to their false and misguided religion, and the common folk were blindly following them, with no insight, so there was no hope that either of the two groups would believe in your message.

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﴿ فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَٰذَا مِنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۖ فَوَيْلٌ لَّهُم مِّمَّا كَتَبَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَّهُم مِّمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ ﴾

(سورة البقرة: ٧٩)

2:79. Then woe to those who write the scripture with their own hands, and then say: This is from Allah, in order to trade it for a small price! Woe to them for what their hands have written, and woe to them for what they have earned thereby.

Here Allah (ﷻ) is warning that those who distort the scriptures and say of the distortion and what they write: ﴿This is from Allah﴾. In fact this is propagating falsehood and concealing truth. But they did that knowingly, ﴿in order to trade it for a small price﴾. All of this world, from beginning to end, is a small price. They made their falsehood a means of snatching what is in people's hands. Thus they wronged the people on two counts: they confused them with regard to their religion and they took their wealth unlawfully, by the worst of means, which is worse than those who take people's wealth by force or by stealing and so on. Hence Allah warned them about these two things and said: ﴿Woe to them for what their hands have written﴾ of distortion and falsehood ﴿and woe to them for what they have earned thereby﴾ of wealth. What is meant by woe is severe punishment and loss. This is a stern warning indeed.

Shaykh al-Islâm (Ibn Taymiyah) said, when discussing this passage ﴿Do you [O believers] then hope... for what they have earned thereby﴾ (vv. 75-79):

> Allah condemned those who distorted words, and this includes those who explain or teach the Qur'an and Sunnah on the basis of innovation [*bid'ah*].

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He also condemned those who have no knowledge of the Book except wishful thinking. This applies to those who do not ponder the meanings of the Qur'an and know nothing of it except mere recitation of its letters. It also applies to those who write anything with their hands that is contrary to the Book of Allah for the purpose of worldly gain, such as saying that this is from Allah, or this is Islam, or this is what the Qur'an and Sunnah say, or this is the understanding of the early generations and leading scholars, or this is one of the basic matters of religion that every individual and the entire Ummah must believe. It also applies to those who conceal what they know of the Qur'an and Sunnah so that the one who differs from him concerning the truth will not use his words as evidence against him.

These are matters that are very common among the followers of whims and desires in general, such as the Râfiḍis[9] and also among many of those who claim to be scholars.




﴿وَقَالُوا۟ لَن تَمَسَّنَا ٱلنَّارُ إِلَّآ أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَةً ۚ قُلْ أَتَّخَذْتُمْ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ عَهْدًا فَلَن يُخْلِفَ ٱللَّهُ عَهْدَهُۥٓ ۖ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ بَلَىٰ مَن كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَٰطَتْ بِهِۦ خَطِيٓـَٔتُهُۥ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلنَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ

[9] Râfiḍis: The Râfiḍis are the extremist Shia who believe that 'Ali (*raḍiya Allâhu 'anhu* – may Allah be pleased with him) should have been the caliph after the Prophet (ﷺ) died, in accordance with his instructions (as they claim), and they believe that the *Ṣaḥâbah* went against the Prophet's instructions by appointing Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) as caliph. For this reason the Râfiḍis bear resentment towards the Ṣaḥâbah whilst, on the other hand, going to such extremes in their love for 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) and his descendants that some of them elevated them to the level of divinity. These Shia groups include the Ithnâ' 'Asharis and the Isma'ilis

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﴿٨١﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلْجَنَّةِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٨٠-٨٢)

2:80. And they say: The fire will only touch us for a few days. Say: Have you received a covenant from Allah, for Allah will never break His covenant? Or are you saying about Allah things of which you have no real knowledge?

2:81. Nay, those who do evil, and are encompassed by their sin will be the inhabitants of the fire; they will abide therein forever.

2:82. But those who believe and do righteous deeds will be the inhabitants of paradise; they will abide therein forever.

Allah mentions their abhorrent actions, then states that despite that they praise themselves and are certain that they will be saved from the punishment of Allah and will be granted His reward, and that the fire will only touch them for a few days, which are so few that they may be counted on the fingers. Thus they combined evildoing with the feeling that they would be safe from the consequences thereof.

Because this was no more than a mere claim, Allah (ﷻ) refuted them by saying:

﴿Say﴾ to them, O Messenger: ﴿Have you received a covenant from Allah﴾ whereby you have pledged to believe in Him and in His Messengers, and to obey Him? This is the covenant that would lead to salvation, a covenant that cannot be changed or altered.
﴿or are you saying about Allah things of which you have no real knowledge?﴾. Here Allah (ﷻ) tells them that the truth of their claim is connected to one of these two matters, and there is no third option: either they have a covenant from Allah, in which case their claim is true, or they are saying something unfounded about Allah, in which case their claim is false. This exposes them to greater disgrace and a more severe punishment. It is known from their situation that they have no covenant from Allah, because they rejected many of the

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Prophets, to the extent that they killed a number of them. Because of their refusal to obey Allah and their breaking of covenants, there is only one possibility, which is that they are fabricators and liars who say about Allah what they do not know, and speaking of Allah without knowledge is one of the gravest and most abhorrent of forbidden actions.

Then Allah (ﷻ) outlines a general ruling that is applicable to all, including the Children of Israel and others. This is the ruling and there is no other; there is no room for their wishful thinking and their claims as to who will be doomed and who will be saved. Allah says: ﴿Nay﴾, the matter is not as you say, for your claim is unfounded. Rather ﴿those who do evil﴾. This may include *shirk* (association of others with Allah) and lesser sins, but what is meant here is shirk, based on the fact that Allah then says ﴿and are encompassed by their sin﴾. What is meant is that it encompasses the one who does it, leaving no way out. This is only applicable in the case of shirk, because the one who believes cannot be encompassed by his sin.
﴿will be the inhabitants of the fire; they will abide therein forever﴾. The Kharijites[10] quote this verse as evidence that anyone who commits sin becomes a disbeliever. But this is proof against them, as you may see, because it clearly refers to shirk. This is the case with every follower of falsehood who quotes a verse or *ṣaḥeeḥ* hadith to support his false notion; what he quotes as evidence will inevitably contain evidence against him.

﴿But those who believe﴾ in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day
﴿and do righteous deeds﴾ – deeds cannot be righteous unless they meet two conditions: they should be done sincerely for the sake of Allah and in accordance with the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ).

[10] Kharijite: The Kharijites are an extremist group who were former members of 'Ali's army who rebelled against 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) after he accepted arbitration. They held extreme views that led them to regard the majority of Muslims as disbelievers.

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To sum up the meaning of these two verses, those who will attain salvation and victory are those who believe and do righteous deeds; those who will be doomed to hell are those who associate others with Allah and disbelieve in Him.

﴿وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَٰقَ بَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهَ وَبِٱلْوَٰلِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِى ٱلْقُرْبَىٰ وَٱلْيَتَٰمَىٰ وَٱلْمَسَٰكِينِ وَقُولُوا۟ لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا۟ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتُوا۟ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنكُمْ وَأَنتُم مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾﴾

(سورة البقرة: ٨٣)

2:83. And [remember] when We took a covenant from the Children of Israel [saying]: Do not worship anyone but Allah; show kindness to your parents and kindred, and to orphans and those in need; speak good words to people; establish prayer; and give zakâh. Then you turned away, except a few of you, and paid no heed.

These teachings are among the basic principles of faith, which Allah has enjoined upon all nations because they contain that which is in the public interest at all times and in all places. So they are not subject to abrogation, because they are fundamental to the religion. Hence Allah enjoined them upon us when He said:

﴿Worship Allah, and do not ascribe any partner to Him...﴾ *(an-Nisâ' 4: 36)*

﴿And [remember] when We took a covenant from the Children of Israel﴾. That was because of their hard-heartedness; whatever command was enjoined upon them, they were reluctant to obey and would not do it unless they were made to give a solemn covenant and binding promises.

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﴿[saying]: Do not worship anyone but Allah﴾. This is a command to worship Allah alone and a prohibition on associating anything with Him. This is the fundamental basis of Islam and no deeds are acceptable if they are not based on that. This is the right that Allah (ﷻ) has over His slaves.

﴿show kindness to your parents﴾ – this includes all types of kindness in word and deed, and implicitly forbids mistreating parents. What is obligatory is treating them kindly, and a command to do something implies prohibition of the opposite.

There are two opposites to kind treatment: mistreatment, which is the greater offence, and failing to show kindness without mistreatment, which is haram but is not as bad as the former. The same may be said with regard to upholding ties of kinship with relatives, orphans and the needy. Kindness may be defined but not quantified, as we shall see below.

Then Allah enjoined kindness towards people in general: ﴿speak good words to people﴾. Speaking good words to people includes enjoining them to do good, forbidding them to do evil, teaching them (beneficial knowledge), greeting them with *salâm*, smiling at them and so on.

As it is not possible for an individual to be kind to all people by monetary means, Allah has enjoined kindness that one may do to all others, namely kindness in words. That also implies that it is prohibited to say bad words to people, even the disbelievers. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Do not dispute with the People of the Book except in the most courteous manner...﴾ *(al-'Ankaboot 29: 46)*

Part of the discipline and good manners that Allah has enjoined upon His slaves is that the individual should be dignified in his words and deeds, and not behave or speak in an indecent, offensive, insulting or argumentative manner. Rather he should have a good attitude, and

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be forbearing, easy-going with everyone, and patient in the face of any annoyance he encounters from people, in obedience to the command of Allah and in hope of attaining His reward.

Then Allah enjoined them to establish prayer and give zakâh, because of what has been discussed above, namely that prayer is indicative of sincere devotion to Allah and zakâh is indicative of kindness towards other people.

﴿Then﴾ after these are good commands which, if one who has insight and wisdom ponders them, he will realise that Allah enjoined them upon His slaves out of kindness and mercy towards them, and He took a covenant from you, but ﴿you turned away﴾, not caring at all about the matter. It may be that the one who turns away does so with the intention of coming back, but these people had no desire to come back to these commands. We seek refuge with Allah from misguidance.

﴿except a few of you﴾. This exception is noted, lest anyone think that all of them turned away; this tells us that Allah protected a few of them and made them steadfast.

﴿وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَٰقَكُمْ لَا تَسْفِكُونَ دِمَآءَكُمْ وَلَا تُخْرِجُونَ أَنفُسَكُم مِّن دِيَٰرِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَنتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ ثُمَّ أَنتُمْ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَتُخْرِجُونَ فَرِيقًا مِّنكُم مِّن دِيَٰرِهِمْ تَظَٰهَرُونَ عَلَيْهِم بِٱلْإِثْمِ وَٱلْعُدْوَٰنِ وَإِن يَأْتُوكُمْ أُسَٰرَىٰ تُفَٰدُوهُمْ وَهُوَ مُحَرَّمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِخْرَاجُهُمْ ۚ أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ ۚ فَمَا جَزَآءُ مَن يَفْعَلُ ذَٰلِكَ مِنكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْىٌ فِى ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ وَيَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰٓ أَشَدِّ ٱلْعَذَابِ ۗ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَٰفِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱشْتَرَوُا۟ ٱلْحَيَوٰةَ ٱلدُّنْيَا بِٱلْءَاخِرَةِ ۖ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ ٱلْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٨٤-٨٦)

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2:84. And remember We took your covenant [saying]: Do not shed one another's blood or drive one another from your homes, and you confirmed it, and you bear witness to that.

2:85. Yet here you are, killing one another and driving a group of your own people out of their homes, helping their enemies against them, in sin and transgression; and if they come to you as captives, you ransom them, when it was forbidden for you to expel them in the first place! Do you believe only in part of the Book and deny another part of it? The punishment for those among you who do this will be nothing but disgrace in this world and on the Day of Resurrection they will be condemned to the harshest punishment. For Allah is not unaware of what you do.

2:86. These are the people who buy the life of this world at the cost of the hereafter; their penalty will not be reduced nor will they be helped.

The deeds referred to in these verses are the deeds of those who lived in Madinah at the time of the revelation. Before the Prophet's mission began, al-Aws and al-Khazraj – who became the *Anṣâr* – were polytheists who used to fight one another according to the customs of the *jâhiliyah* (pre-Islamic period). Three Jewish tribes – Banu Quraydhah, Banu an-Naḍeer and Banu Qaynuqâ' – came and settled there, and each of these tribes became allies of a group of the people of Madinah.

When they fought, each Jew would help his ally against his opponents, who had the help of another Jewish group. So one Jew might kill another or expel him from his home, in the event of expulsion and plunder. Then, when the war ended and there were prisoners on both sides, they would ransom one another.

These three things were enjoined upon them: they were instructed not to shed one another's blood or expel one another, and if there were

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prisoners from among them, it was an obligation upon them to ransom them. They did the latter, but did not fulfil the first two obligations.

Allah condemned them for that, and said: ﴿Do you believe only in part of the Book﴾ namely the ransom of prisoners ﴿and deny another part of it?﴾ namely (the prohibition on) killing and expelling one another.

This offers the strongest evidence that faith requires acting upon commands and heeding prohibitions, and that the deeds that are enjoined are part of faith. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿The punishment for those among you who do this will be nothing but disgrace in this world﴾, which indeed came to pass. Allah requited them and gave His Messenger (ﷺ) power over them; he executed some of them, captured others and expelled some.

﴿and on the Day of Resurrection they will be condemned to the harshest﴾ that is, the most severe ﴿punishment. For Allah is not unaware of what you do﴾.

Then Allah (ﷻ) tells us the reason why they disbelieved in part of the Book and believed in other parts: ﴿These are the people who buy the life of this world at the cost of the hereafter﴾. They thought that if they did not help their allies, that would be a source of shame. So they chose the flames over shame. Hence Allah says: ﴿their penalty will not be reduced﴾ rather it will remain severe and there will be no time of respite; ﴿nor will they be helped﴾ that is, no harm will be warded off from them.




﴿ وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنۢ بَعْدِهِۦ بِٱلرُّسُلِ ۖ وَءَاتَيْنَا عِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ وَأَيَّدْنَٰهُ بِرُوحِ ٱلْقُدُسِ ۗ أَفَكُلَّمَا جَآءَكُمْ رَسُولٌۢ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَىٰٓ أَنفُسُكُمُ ٱسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ فَفَرِيقًا كَذَّبْتُمْ وَفَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٨٧)

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2:87. We gave Moosâ the Book and sent a succession of Messengers after him; We gave 'Eesâ the son of Maryam clear signs and supported him with the Pure Spirit. Is it that whenever there came to you a Messenger with something that was not in accordance with your desires, you became arrogant; some you disbelieved, and others you killed?

Here Allah reminds the Children of Israel that He sent Moosâ to them and gave him the Torah; after him, He sent Messengers who ruled in accordance with the Torah, until He sent their final Prophet, 'Eesâ ibn Maryam (ﷺ), and gave him clear signs that would be sufficient proof for any human to believe in him.

﴿supported him with the Pure Spirit﴾ that is, Allah strengthened him with the Pure Spirit.

The majority of commentators stated that this refers to Jibreel (ﷺ); others suggested that it refers to faith by means of which Allah supports His slaves.

Yet, despite these blessings that cannot be quantified, when the Messengers came to you, ﴿with something that was not in accordance with your desires, you became arrogant﴾ that is, you were too arrogant to believe in them.
﴿some﴾ of them ﴿you disbelieved, and others you killed﴾, so you gave precedence to your whims and desires over guidance, and to this world over the hereafter. This is an obvious rebuke.

 

﴿وَقَالُوا۟ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌۢ ۚ بَل لَّعَنَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَلِيلًا مَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٨٨)

2:88. They say: Our hearts are impenetrably wrapped [against whatever you say]. Nay, Allah has cursed them for their disbelief; little is it they believe.

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As their excuse for not believing that to which you, O Prophet, are calling them, they stated that their hearts are impenetrably wrapped. What is meant is that their hearts are covered over, so they do not understand what you say. In other words, they have an excuse – or so they say – for not understanding. But this is a lie on their part, hence Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿Nay, Allah has cursed them for their disbelief﴾ that is, they are cast away and cursed because of their disbelief and the believers among them are few, or they have little faith and it is their disbelief that is prevalent.




﴿وَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ كِتَٰبٌ مِّنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ وَكَانُوا۟ مِن قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُم مَّا عَرَفُوا۟ كَفَرُوا۟ بِهِۦ ۚ فَلَعْنَةُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَى ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾ بِئْسَمَا ٱشْتَرَوْا۟ بِهِۦٓ أَنفُسَهُمْ أَن يَكْفُرُوا۟ بِمَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ بَغْيًا أَن يُنَزِّلَ ٱللَّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِۦ عَلَىٰ مَن يَشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِۦ ۖ فَبَآءُو بِغَضَبٍ عَلَىٰ غَضَبٍ ۚ وَلِلْكَٰفِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿٩٠﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٨٩-٩٠)

2:89. And now that there has come to them a Book from Allah, confirming what is with them – although in the past they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved – when there comes to them that which they recognise as truth, they disbelieve in it; the curse of Allah is upon the disbelievers.

2:90. How miserable is the price for which they have sold their souls, in that they reject that which Allah has sent down, out of resentment that Allah would send it down by His grace upon any of His slaves He chooses: Thus have they incurred wrath upon wrath. And for the disbelievers there will be a humiliating punishment.

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That is, when a Book has come to them from Allah at the hands of the best of creation and the Seal of the Prophets, confirming that which is with them of the Torah, and they had prior knowledge of it and were certain of its coming – to the extent that if war broke out between them and the polytheists during the jâhiliyah, they would speak of the victory they would achieve when this Prophet (ﷺ) came, and warn them (the polytheists) about his imminent appearance and that they would fight the polytheists alongside him. But when this Book came to them, and the Prophet (ﷺ) whom they recognised, they rejected him out of resentment and envy that Allah would send it down, by His grace, upon whomever He willed among His slaves. So Allah cursed them and was angry with them, wrath upon wrath, because their disbelief was so great and because they kept doubting and associating others with Allah.

﴿And for the disbelievers there will be a humiliating﴾ that is, painful ﴿punishment﴾, namely being thrown into hell and missing out on eternal bliss (in paradise). What a wretched situation they will be in, and what a bad deal they made when they gave up belief in Allah and in His Books and Messengers, and traded it for disbelief in Him and in His Books and Messengers, despite their knowledge and certainty. Thus their punishment will be more severe.




﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا۟ بِمَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ قَالُوا۟ نُؤْمِنُ بِمَآ أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَيَكْفُرُونَ
بِمَا وَرَآءَهُۥ وَهُوَ ٱلْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ ۗ قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنۢبِيَآءَ ٱللَّهِ مِن قَبْلُ إِن
كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَكُم مُّوسَىٰ بِٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ ثُمَّ ٱتَّخَذْتُمُ ٱلْعِجْلَ
مِنۢ بَعْدِهِۦ وَأَنتُمْ ظَٰلِمُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَٰقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ
ٱلطُّورَ خُذُوا۟ مَآ ءَاتَيْنَٰكُم بِقُوَّةٍ وَٱسْمَعُوا۟ ۖ قَالُوا۟ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأُشْرِبُوا۟

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فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ ٱلْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ ۚ قُلْ بِئْسَمَا يَأْمُرُكُم بِهِۦٓ إِيمَٰنُكُمْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٩١-٩٣)

2:91. When it is said to them: Believe in that which Allah has revealed, they say: We believe in that which was revealed to us; yet they disbelieve in that which came after it, even though it is truth confirming that which is with them. Say: Why then did you kill the Prophets of Allah in the past, if you were indeed believers?

2:92. Moosâ came to you with clear signs, yet in his absence you took the calf [for worship] and thus became transgressors.

2:93. And [remember] when We took a covenant from you and We raised the Mount above you, [saying]: Hold fast to that which We have given you and listen, they said: We hear and we disobey. And their hearts were filled with love of the calf, because of their disbelief. Say: How wretched is that which your faith commands you to do, if you are believers.

That is, when the Jews were commanded to believe in that which Allah had sent down to His Messenger (ﷺ), namely the Qur'an, they were arrogant and refused, saying: ﴿We believe in that which was revealed to us; yet they disbelieve in that which came after it﴾ of other Books, even though what they should have done was believe in everything that Allah revealed, whether it was revealed to them or to others. That is beneficial faith, belief in what Allah has revealed to all the Messengers of Allah.

As for differentiating between the Messengers and the Books, claiming to believe in some but not others, this is not faith; rather it is the essence of disbelief. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers, and want to make a distinction between [belief in] Allah and [belief in] His Messengers, and say: We believe in some and disbelieve in others

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– and seek to adopt a way in between, it is they who are indeed disbelievers...﴾ *(an-Nisâ' 4: 150-151)*

Hence Allah (ﷻ) rebuked them emphatically here, with such a strong argument that they could not evade it. He responded to their disbelief in the Qur'an in two ways: He said ﴿even though it is truth﴾ – so if it is truth in all that it contains of stories, commands and prohibitions, and it is from their Lord, then disbelieving in it after that is disbelief in Allah and rejection of the truth that He sent down.

Then He said ﴿confirming that which is with them﴾ that is, in accordance with it in everything that is true and correct, and with final authority over them (previous scriptures). So why do you believe in that which was revealed to you, but you reject that which is equal to it? Can this be anything other than bias and following whims and desires instead of guidance? Moreover, if the Qur'an confirms that which is with them, this is proof for what they have of Books, and they have no way of proving (that their books were originally revealed from Allah) except through the Qur'an. So if they disbelieve in it and reject it, they become like one who made a claim on the basis of proof, and had no other basis for it; his claim cannot be accepted unless his proof is sound, then he examines his proof and argument, and finds them flawed so he rejects them. Is this not foolishness and insanity? Therefore their rejection of the Qur'an is akin to rejection of what they have in their own hands, and undermines it.

Then Allah demonstrated that the claim to believe in what was revealed to them was baseless, as He said:
﴿Say﴾ to them ﴿Why then did you kill the Prophets of Allah in the past, if you were indeed believers? Moosâ came to you with clear signs﴾ that is, he brought clear evidence that pointed to the truth.
﴿yet in his absence﴾ that is, after he had left, ﴿you took the calf [for worship] and thus became transgressors﴾, and you had no excuse for doing that.

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﴿And [remember] when We took a covenant from you and We raised the Mount above you, [saying]: Hold fast to that which We have given you and listen﴾ that is, listen to it, accept it, obey and respond ﴿they said: We hear and we disobey﴾ that is, this is how they were. ﴿And their hearts were filled with love of the calf﴾ that is, love of the calf and love of worshipping it was instilled in their hearts, because of their disbelief.

﴿Say: How wretched is that which your faith commands you to do, if you are believers﴾ that is, you claim to believe and boast about having the true religion, yet you killed the Prophets of Allah and took the calf as a god instead of Allah, when your Prophet Moosâ was absent from you, and you did not accept his commands and prohibitions except after receiving threats and after the Mount was raised above you. Then you paid lip service to commitment, but your actions contradicted that. So what is this faith that you claim to have, and what is this religion?

If this is faith, as you claim, then how wretched is the faith that calls its followers to transgression, disbelief in the Messengers of Allah and great disobedience, when it is well known that true faith enjoins its followers to do all that is good and forbids them to do all that is evil. Thus their lies were highlighted and the contradiction (between their words and deeds) became evident.




﴿قُلْ إِن كَانَتْ لَكُمُ ٱلدَّارُ ٱلْآخِرَةُ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ خَالِصَةً مِّن دُونِ ٱلنَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوُا۟ ٱلْمَوْتَ إِن كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَلَن يَتَمَنَّوْهُ أَبَدًۢا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌۢ بِٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾ وَلَتَجِدَنَّهُمْ أَحْرَصَ ٱلنَّاسِ عَلَىٰ حَيَوٰةٍ وَمِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا۟ ۚ يَوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمُزَحْزِحِهِۦ مِنَ ٱلْعَذَابِ أَن يُعَمَّرَ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ بَصِيرٌۢ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٩٤-٩٦)

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2:94. Say: If the final abode with Allah is yours alone, to the exclusion of all others, then wish for death, if you are sincere.

2:95. But they will never wish for death, because of what their own hands have sent on before them, and Allah is fully aware of the transgressors.

2:96. You will surely find them, of all people, most greedy for life, even more than the polytheists. Each one of them wishes that he could be granted a life of a thousand years, but his being granted such a long life will not save him from punishment. For Allah sees well all that they do.

﴿Say﴾ that is, tell them, by way of correcting their false claims ﴿If the final abode with Allah﴾ namely paradise ﴿is yours alone, to the exclusion of all others﴾, as you claim that no one will enter paradise except those who are Jews or Christians, and that the fire of hell will only touch them for a few days *(2: 80)*, so if you are telling the truth, ﴿then wish for death﴾. This is a kind of challenge between them and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

After having been cornered and pressured in response to their stubbornness, they are left with only one of two choices: either to believe in Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), or to accept the challenge, which is to wish for death which will bring them to that abode that is exclusively theirs (according to their claim). But they refused to do that.

Thus it is established that they are in a state of extreme stubbornness and opposition to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), despite the fact that they are aware of what they are doing. Hence Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿But they will never wish for death, because of what their own hands have sent on before them﴾ of disbelief and sin; they are well aware that this is a path that will lead them to the requital for their evil deeds. Hence death was the most hateful of things to them and they were

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greedier for life than anyone else, even the polytheists who did not believe in any of the Messengers or Books.

Then Allah mentioned the intensity of their love for this world: ﴿Each one of them wishes that he could be granted a life of a thousand years﴾. This highlights how eager they were to live, as they wished for something that is impossible. However, even if they were to live for that number of years, it would not avail them anything or ward off any of the punishment.

﴿For Allah sees well all that they do﴾ – this is a threat to them of punishment for their deeds.



﴿قُلْ مَن كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُۥ نَزَّلَهُۥ عَلَىٰ قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾ مَن كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّلَّهِ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَىٰلَ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِّلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٩٧-٩٨)

2:97. Say: Whoever is an enemy to Jibreel – for he brings down the [revelation] to your heart by Allah's leave, a confirmation of what came before it, and guidance and glad tidings to the believers –

2:98. Whoever is an enemy to Allah and His angels and Messengers, to Jibreel and Meekâl [Meekâ'eel], then indeed, Allah is an enemy to the disbelievers.

That is, say to these Jews, who claim that what is preventing them from believing in you is the fact that your protector is Jibreel (عليه السلام), and if it were anyone else among the angels of Allah, they would have believed in you, that this claim of yours is flawed and self-contradictory, and it is arrogance towards Allah. That is because Jibreel (عليه السلام) is the one who brought down the Qur'an to your heart

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from Allah, and he is the one who came down to the Prophets before you; he is the one whom Allah commanded and sent to do that. Hence he is primarily a Messenger. Furthermore, this Book that Jibreel brought down confirms the scriptures that came before it, and does not differ from them or contradict them; it contains complete guidance away from all types of misguidance, and glad tidings of good in this world and in the hereafter for those who believe in it. Hence enmity towards Jibreel, who is described thus, constitutes disbelief in Allah and His signs, and it is enmity towards Allah and towards His Messengers and angels. Their enmity towards Jibreel was not because of who he is; rather it was because of what he brought down of the truth from Allah to the Messengers of Allah. Hence that enmity implies disbelief in and enmity towards the One Who sent him, the message with which he was sent and the one to whom he was sent.

﴿وَلَقَدْ أَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكَ ءَايَٰتٍۭ بَيِّنَٰتٍ ۖ وَمَا يَكْفُرُ بِهَآ إِلَّا ٱلْفَٰسِقُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٩٩)

2:99. We have sent down to you clear signs; and none reject them but the evildoers.

Here Allah says to His Prophet (ﷺ): ﴿We have sent down to you clear signs﴾, by means of which the one who seeks guidance will find it, and so as to establish proof against those who stubbornly refuse (to follow guidance). This is such clear guidance to the truth that no one could refuse to accept but an evildoer who rebels against the command of Allah, refuses to obey Him and is extremely arrogant.

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﴿أَوَكُلَّمَا عَٰهَدُوا۟ عَهْدًا نَّبَذَهُۥ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُم ۚ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾﴾

(سورة البقرة: ١٠٠)

2:100. Is it not so that every time they make a covenant, some of them cast it aside? In fact, most of them do not believe.

This is an expression of astonishment at how often they made covenants but did not have the patience to fulfil them. The phrase ﴿every time﴾ is indicative of something that happened repeatedly. Every time they made a covenant, the outcome was that they broke it. What was the reason for that? The reason was that most of them did not believe, and it is their lack of faith that caused them to break the covenants. If they had been sincere in faith, they would have been like those of whom Allah says:

﴿Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah...﴾ *(al-Aḥzāb 33: 23)*

﴿وَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ نَبَذَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ كِتَٰبَ ٱللَّهِ وَرَآءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾ وَٱتَّبَعُوا۟ مَا تَتْلُوا۟ ٱلشَّيَٰطِينُ عَلَىٰ مُلْكِ سُلَيْمَٰنَ ۖ وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمَٰنُ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱلشَّيَٰطِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ يُعَلِّمُونَ ٱلنَّاسَ ٱلسِّحْرَ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ عَلَى ٱلْمَلَكَيْنِ بِبَابِلَ هَٰرُوتَ وَمَٰرُوتَ ۚ وَمَا يُعَلِّمَانِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَآ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ ۖ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِۦ بَيْنَ ٱلْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِۦ ۚ وَمَا هُم بِضَآرِّينَ بِهِۦ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنفَعُهُمْ ۚ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا۟ لَمَنِ ٱشْتَرَىٰهُ مَا لَهُۥ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَٰقٍ ۚ وَلَبِئْسَ مَا شَرَوْا۟ بِهِۦٓ أَنفُسَهُمْ ۚ لَوْ كَانُوا۟

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يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَٱتَّقَوْا۟ لَمَثُوبَةٌ مِّنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ خَيْرٌ ۖ لَّوْ كَانُوا۟ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٠١-١٠٣)

2:101. And when there came to them a Messenger from Allah, confirming that which was with them, some of those who had been given the Book cast the Book of Allah behind their backs as if they had no knowledge.

2:102. They followed that which the devils used to read [of books of magic] during the reign of Sulaymân. It was not Sulaymân who disbelieved; rather the devils disbelieved and taught men magic, and such things as had come down at Babylon to the two angels Hâroot and Mâroot. But these two never taught anyone without [first] saying: We are but a trial, so do not disbelieve. They learned from them the means of sowing discord between a man and his wife, but they could not harm anyone thereby except by Allah's leave. They learned that which harmed them, and did not benefit them, knowing full well that whoever dealt in it [magic] would have no share in the hereafter. How wretched was the price for which they sold their souls, if only they knew.

2:103. If they had believed and feared Allah, the reward from Allah would have been better, if only they knew.

When this noble Messenger (ﷺ) brought to them this great Book that was based on truth and was in harmony with that which they had, that was at a time when they claimed to be adhering to their scripture. But when they disbelieved in this Messenger (ﷺ) and that which he brought, ﴿some of those who had been given the Book cast the Book of Allah﴾, which had been sent down to them, ﴿behind their backs﴾, and showed no interest in it. This description is more emphatic than saying that they turned away from it. By doing this, it was as if they were among the ignorant, when in fact they were well aware that it was true.

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Thus it becomes clear that this group among the People of the Book were not adhering to anything, because they did not believe in this Messenger (ﷺ). Hence their disbelief in him was tantamount to disbelief in their own scriptures, but they did not realise that.

It is a regular part of Allah's decree, which is based on divine wisdom, that if a person forsakes that which might have benefitted him, and he was able to benefit from it but did not, then he will be caused to deal with that which is harmful to him. The one who fails to worship Allah will end up worshipping idols; the one who fails to love, fear and put his hope in Allah will end up loving, fearing and putting his hope in something other than Allah; the one who fails to spend his wealth in obedience to Allah will spend it in obedience to the Shaytân; the one who fails to show humility towards his Lord will end up being humiliated by other people; the one who fails to follow the truth will end up following falsehood.

Thus these Jews followed what the devils used to read (of the books of magic) during the reign of Sulaymân. These devils brought magic to people and claimed that Sulaymân used to use it and achieved great power by means of it, but they were lying. Sulaymân did not use magic; rather Allah declared him to be innocent of that, as He said: ﴿It was not Sulaymân who disbelieved﴾ by learning magic, for he did not learn it.
﴿rather the devils disbelieved﴾ by doing that, ﴿and taught men magic﴾ so as to misguide them, and out of their eagerness to tempt the sons of Adam.

Similarly, the Jews practised that magic that had come down to the two angels who lived at Babylon, in the land of Iraq. Magic was sent down to them as a test and a trial from Allah to His slaves. So (these two angels) taught them magic, ﴿But these two never taught anyone without [first]﴾ advising him and ﴿saying: We are but a trial; so do not disbelieve﴾ that is, do not learn magic, for it is disbelief. So they would tell him not to learn magic, and they would inform

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him of how bad it was. The devils' teaching of magic was aimed at confusing and misguiding people, and they attributed it to one whom Allah declared innocent of that, namely Sulaymân (ﷺ). In contrast, the angels' teaching of magic was as a test, after they offered advice, so as to leave no excuse.

These Jews practised the magic that had been taught by the devils and that which had been taught by the two angels; thus they ignored the knowledge brought by the Prophets and Messengers, turning instead to the knowledge of the devils. Every individual aspires to that which suits his nature.

Then Allah mentions the evil consequences of magic, as He says: ﴿They learned from them the means of sowing discord between a man and his wife﴾ even though the love between spouses cannot be compared to any other love, because Allah says concerning them:

﴿...and He has instilled love and compassion between you...﴾ *(ar-Room 30: 21)*

This indicates that magic is something real, and that it may cause harm by Allah's leave, if He wills it. Allah's leave is of two types: that which has to do with the divine decree, and is connected to the will of Allah, as in this verse; and that which has to do with the laws prescribed by Allah, as referred to in the previous verse: ﴿for he brings down the [revelation] to your heart by Allah's leave﴾ *(2: 97)*.

In this and similar verses, it states that no matter how powerful the means may be, they are still subject to the divine will and decree, and are not independent in their effect. No one among the Ummah differed with regard to this principle apart from the Qadaris, who said that people's deeds are independent and are not subject to the divine will, and thus they excluded people's deeds from the divine decree, thereby going against the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) and the consensus of the Companions and *tâbi'een*.

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Then Allah states that magic is purely harmful, with no benefits, either spiritual or worldly. There may be some worldly benefits in some sins, as Allah says with regard to alcohol and gambling: ﴿Say: In them is great sin, and some benefit for people; but the sin is greater than the benefit﴾ *(2: 219)*.

But magic is purely harmful, so there is no need for it at all. All forbidden things are either completely harmful, or their evil consequences outweigh any benefit in them. By the same token, everything that is enjoined is either completely good, or its good consequences outweigh any bad.

﴿knowing full well﴾ that is, the Jews were well aware ﴿that whoever dealt in it [magic] would have no share in the hereafter﴾ that is, rather he would be subject to punishment. They did not do it out of ignorance; rather it was because they preferred the life of this world to the hereafter.

﴿How wretched was the price for which they sold their souls, if only they knew﴾ that is, if only they had had the kind of knowledge that would lead to righteous deeds, then they would not have done that.




﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لَا تَقُولُوا۟ رَٰعِنَا وَقُولُوا۟ ٱنظُرْنَا وَٱسْمَعُوا۟ ۗ وَلِلْكَٰفِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠٤﴾ مَّا يَوَدُّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ مِنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ وَلَا ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ أَن يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُم مِّنْ خَيْرٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِۦ مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ ذُو ٱلْفَضْلِ ٱلْعَظِيمِ ﴿١٠٥﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٠٤-١٠٥)

2:104. O you who believe, do not say [to the Messenger]: *râ'inâ*; rather say: *undhurnâ*[11], and listen. For the disbelievers there will be a painful punishment.

[11] *Râ'inâ* means "Listen to us"; *undhurnâ* means "Look at us". Both words convey the meaning of "Pay attention to us", but with a slight twist in =

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2:105. It is never the wish of the disbelievers among the People of the Book, or of the polytheists, that anything good should come down to you from your Lord. But Allah singles out for His mercy whomever He wills – for Allah is Possessor of abundant grace.

When the Muslims addressed the Messenger (ﷺ) as he was teaching them about their religion, they would say: *râ'inâ*, meaning pay attention to us, giving the word an acceptable meaning. The Jews, however, gave the same word an offensive meaning; they took advantage of this opportunity to address the Messenger (ﷺ) with this word, intending the offensive meaning. So Allah told the believers not to use this word, so as to put a stop to this problem. This shows us that something permissible may be disallowed, if it becomes a means that leads to something haram. It also shows us that we should adopt good manners and use words that can only be interpreted in a good way; we should also avoid foul speech and offensive words, or words that are ambiguous and may be interpreted in an inappropriate manner. So Allah instructed them to use words that could only be interpreted in a good way, as He said:

﴿rather say *undhurnâ*﴾, for this word is sufficient to convey the desired meaning without any reservations.

﴿and listen﴾. Who or what is to be listened to is not specified, so as to include everything that it is enjoined to listen to, such as the Qur'an and Sunnah. We should listen to them, understand them and respond to them. This is proper manners and obedience.

Then Allah warns the disbelievers of the painful punishment, and speaks of the enmity of the Jews and polytheists towards the believers, for they do not wish that ﴿anything good﴾ whether it be great or small ﴿should come down to you from your Lord﴾. This stems from envy

= pronunciation, the former had an offensive meaning in Hebrew, which the Jews took advantage of to mock the Prophet (ﷺ). Hence the believers were instructed to use a word that could not be twisted in this manner.

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and resentment on their part because Allah has singled you out for His grace. For He is ﴿Possessor of abundant grace﴾; by His grace towards you, He sent down the Book to your Messenger (ﷺ), in order to purify you, teach you the Book and wisdom, and teach you that which you did not know. To Him be all praise.

 

﴿ مَا نَنسَخْ مِنْ ءَايَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْهَآ أَوْ مِثْلِهَآ ۗ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَهُۥ مُلْكُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۖ وَمَا لَكُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ مِن وَلِىٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١٠٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٠٦-١٠٧)

2:106. Whenever We abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or one equal to it. Do you not know that Allah has power over all things?

2:107. Do you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and besides Him you have neither protector nor helper?

The Arabic word *naskh* (translated here as "abrogation") means moving or shifting. What is meant by abrogation is shifting the accountable (that is, adults of sound mind) from one Islamic ruling to another, or cancelling the ruling altogether. The Jews do not accept the idea of abrogation, and they say that it is not permissible, even though it is mentioned in their Torah. The rejection of it constitutes disbelief, and is pure whims and desires.

Allah (ﷻ) tells us of His wisdom in ordaining abrogation, and that He does not abrogate any verse ﴿or cause it to be forgotten﴾, that is, cause people to forget it and remove it from their hearts, but He ﴿bring[s] one better than it﴾ and more beneficial, ﴿or one equal to it﴾.

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This indicates that abrogation does not detract from what is in your best interests, because His grace and bounty always increases, especially for this Ummah, for which He has made its religion very easy.

He tells us that whoever objects to the concept of abrogation is underestimating His sovereignty and power, as He says:
﴿Do you not know that Allah has power over all things? Do you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth﴾?

If He is in control of you and of your affairs, and He directs your affairs on the basis of kindness and mercy when issuing His decrees, commands and prohibitions, then just as there is no restriction with regard to what He decrees for His slaves, by the same token no one should object to what He prescribes for His slaves of different kinds of rulings. The individual is under the control of his Lord, subject to His religious rulings and divine decrees. So how can he have any objections?

Moreover, He is also the protector and helper of His slaves; so He helps them to attain that which is in their best interests and supports them in warding off harm from them. One aspect of His being their protector is that He prescribes rulings for them as dictated by His wisdom and mercy towards them.

The one who ponders what happened of abrogation in the Qur'an and Sunnah will come to know thereby the wisdom of Allah and His mercy towards His slaves, for He helps them to attain that which is in their best interests in ways that they do not realise.

 

﴿ أَمْ تُرِيدُونَ أَن تَسْـَٔلُوا۟ رَسُولَكُمْ كَمَا سُـُٔلَ مُوسَىٰ مِن قَبْلُ ۗ وَمَن يَتَبَدَّلِ
ٱلْكُفْرَ بِٱلْإِيمَٰنِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَآءَ ٱلسَّبِيلِ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَدَّ كَثِيرٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ

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ٱلْكِتَٰبِ لَوْ يَرُدُّونَكُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ إِيمَٰنِكُمْ كُفَّارًا حَسَدًا مِّنْ عِندِ أَنفُسِهِم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ ٱلْحَقُّ ۖ فَٱعْفُوا۟ وَٱصْفَحُوا۟ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِىَ ٱللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِۦٓ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَأَقِيمُوا۟ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتُوا۟ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ ۚ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا۟ لِأَنفُسِكُم مِّنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١١٠﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٠٨-١١٠)

2:108. Do you want to question your Messenger just as Moosâ was questioned before? Whoever exchanges faith for disbelief has strayed from the right path.

2:109. Many among the People of the Book wish they could turn you back to disbelief after you have believed, out of the envy they have in their hearts, after the truth has become clear to them. But forgive and overlook until Allah gives His command; for Allah has power over all things.

2:110. And establish prayer and give zakâh, and whatever good you send forth for your souls, you will find it with Allah, for Allah sees well all that you do.

Here Allah forbids the believers, or the Jews, to question their Messenger ﴿as Moosâ was questioned before﴾. What is referred to here is questioning by way of causing annoyance or raising objections, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿The People of the Book ask you to bring down for them a book from heaven. Indeed, they asked Moosâ for something even greater than that, when they said: Let us see Allah with our own eyes...﴾ *(an-Nisâ' 4: 153)*

﴿O you who believe, do not ask questions about matters which, if they were made known to you, would only cause you hardship...﴾ *(al-Mâ'idah 5: 101)*

This and similar matters are forbidden.

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With regard to asking in order to learn and understand, this is something praiseworthy and was enjoined by Allah when He said:

﴿...So [O people] ask those who have knowledge, if you do not know.﴾ *(an-Nahl 16: 43)*

This is something of which He approves, as He says: ﴿They ask you about intoxicants and gambling﴾ *(2: 219)*. And: ﴿They ask you concerning [the property of] orphans﴾ *(2: 220)*. And so on.

Because the kind of asking that is forbidden is blameworthy, it may lead the one who asks to disbelief, as Allah says: ﴿Whoever exchanges faith for disbelief has strayed from the right path﴾.

Then He tells them about the envy of many of the People of the Book, which has reached such a point that they wished ﴿they could turn you back to disbelief after you have believed﴾, and they strove to achieve that, plotting and planning, but their plot backfired on them, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿A group among the People of the Book say: [Claim to] believe in the morning in what is revealed to the believers, but reject it at the end of the day; perhaps they may turn back [from Islam].﴾ *(Âl 'Imrân 3: 72)*

That was because of the envy they had in their hearts.

Hence Allah enjoined the believers to respond to their extreme mistreatment with forgiveness and to overlook it until He gave His command.

Then after that, Allah gave His command to them to fight in jihad. Thus Allah gave the believers the satisfaction of settling the score with them. So they killed some, took some prisoner and expelled others. ﴿for Allah has power over all things﴾.

Then Allah commanded them to make the most of the present time by establishing the prayer, giving zakâh and doing all kinds of acts of worship. He promised them that whatever they did of good would never be lost with Allah; rather they would find it with Him in abundance, as He would preserve it.
﴿for Allah sees well all that you do﴾.

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﴿وَقَالُوا۟ لَن يَدْخُلَ ٱلْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَن كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصَٰرَىٰ ۗ تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ ۗ قُلْ هَاتُوا۟ بُرْهَٰنَكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ ﴿١١١﴾ بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُۥ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُۥٓ أَجْرُهُۥ عِندَ رَبِّهِۦ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١١١-١١٢)

2:111. And they say: No one will enter paradise unless he is a Jew or a Christian. That is their own wishful thinking. Say: Produce your evidence if you are telling the truth.

2:112. Nay, whoever submits himself [completely] to Allah and is a doer of good will have his reward with his Lord; they will have no fear, nor will they grieve.

That is, the Jews said: No one will ever enter paradise except one who is a Jew. The Christians said: No one will ever enter paradise except one who is a Christian. Thus they ruled that paradise was for them alone. But this was just wishful thinking that cannot be accepted unless it is accompanied by proof and evidence. So ﴿Produce your evidence if you are telling the truth﴾.

The same applies to anyone who makes a claim; he must supply proof to the validity of his claim, otherwise if it was met by an opposing claim from someone else, and he had no proof either, then there would be no difference between the two. Evidence is that which proves or disproves a claim; as they have no proof, it is known that this claim of theirs is false.

Then Allah describes the ruling that is based on clear proof, which is general in application, as He says: ﴿Nay﴾, the matter is not as you wish or claim. Rather ﴿whoever submits himself [completely] to Allah﴾ that is, is sincere to Allah alone in his deeds and turns to Him with all his heart

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﴿and﴾ in addition to his sincerity ﴿is a doer of good﴾ with regard to worshipping his Lord, in that he worships Him as He has prescribed – these are the only ones who are the people of paradise.

﴿[he] will have his reward with his Lord﴾ which is paradise, with all that it contains of delights
﴿they will have no fear, nor will they grieve﴾, for they will have attained that which they seek and will have been saved from that which they fear.

From this we may understand that whoever is not like that is one of the people of hell who are doomed, for there is no salvation except for those who are sincere towards Allah and follow the Messenger (ﷺ).

 

﴿وَقَالَتِ ٱلْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتِ ٱلنَّصَٰرَىٰ عَلَىٰ شَىْءٍ وَقَالَتِ ٱلنَّصَٰرَىٰ لَيْسَتِ ٱلْيَهُودُ عَلَىٰ شَىْءٍ وَهُمْ يَتْلُونَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ قَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ ۚ فَٱللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا۟ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١١٣)

2:113. The Jews say: The Christians have nothing to stand on, and the Christians say: The Jews have nothing to stand on, although they both read the scripture, and those who have no knowledge say something similar; but on the Day of Resurrection Allah will judge between them concerning that wherein they differ.

Whims and desires and envy among the People of the Book reached such a degree that they regarded one another as misguided disbelievers, as the unlettered among the polytheist Arabs also did.

Other groups also made similar claims, so each group regarded others as misguided, but in the hereafter Allah will judge between those who differed on the basis of the fair principle mentioned above *(2: 112)*, as He has told His slaves. Therefore there will be no success

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or salvation on the Day of Resurrection except for those who believed in all the Prophets and Messengers, and obeyed the commands of their Lord and heeded His prohibitions. Anyone other than these is doomed.




﴿وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن مَّنَعَ مَسَٰجِدَ ٱللَّهِ أَن يُذْكَرَ فِيهَا ٱسْمُهُۥ وَسَعَىٰ فِى خَرَابِهَآ ۚ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ أَن يَدْخُلُوهَآ إِلَّا خَآئِفِينَ ۚ لَهُمْ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا خِزْىٌ وَلَهُمْ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١١٤﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١١٤)

2:114. And who does greater wrong than one who prevents Allah's name from being mentioned in His places of worship and strives to bring about their ruin? Such people do not deserve to enter them except in fear. For them there is disgrace in this world and grievous punishment in the hereafter.

That is, there is no one who does greater wrong or commits a greater offence than one who prevents mention of Allah, establishment of prayer and other acts of devotion in His places of worship.

﴿and strives﴾ that is, tries hard and does his utmost ﴿to bring about their ruin﴾ in both a physical and metaphorical sense. Physical ruin means destroying and demolishing them, and making them dirty by throwing rubbish into them. Metaphorical ruin means preventing people from mentioning Allah's name therein. This is general in meaning, and applies to everyone who meets this description. That includes the people of the elephant, and Quraysh when they prevented the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) from reaching the Kaaba in the year of al-Ḥudaybiyah. It also includes the Christians when they destroyed Bayt al-Maqdis, and other evildoers who strive to destroy places of worship, in opposition to Allah and by way of challenging Him. Hence Allah requited them by preventing them from entering it, as prescribed in Sharia and as He decrees, except in

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a state of fear and humiliation. Because they terrorised the slaves of Allah, Allah cast fear in their hearts. When the polytheists prevented the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) from reaching Makkah, it was not long before Allah gave permission to His Messenger (ﷺ) to conquer Makkah and prevent the polytheists from coming near His House, as He said:

﴿O you who believe, truly the polytheists are impure, so do not let them come near the Sacred Mosque after this [final] year...﴾ *(at-Tawbah 9: 28)*

As for the people of the elephant, Allah told us what happened to them; with regard to the Christians, Allah gave the believers power over them and they took Bayt al-Maqdis away from them.

This applies to everyone who meets this description; Allah's justice will inevitably overtake him. This is one of the great signs of which the Creator spoke before it happened, and it happened as foretold. The scholars quoted this verse as evidence that it is not permissible to permit the disbelievers to enter the mosques.

﴿For them there is disgrace﴾ that is, shame and scandal, as mentioned above, ﴿in this world and grievous punishment in the hereafter﴾.

As there is no one who does greater evil than those who prevent the name of Allah from being mentioned in His mosques, then there is no one who has greater faith than the one who strives to tend the mosques in both a physical and metaphorical sense, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿The mosques of Allah are only to be visited and tended by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day...﴾ *(at-Tawbah 9: 18)*

Indeed, Allah (ﷻ) enjoined that His houses should be venerated and honoured, as He says:

﴿[Such lamps are lit] in houses [mosques] which Allah has ordained to be built so that His name may be remembered therein...﴾ *(an-Noor 24: 36)*

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There are many rules that apply to mosques, all of which are based on these verses.




﴿وَلِلَّهِ ٱلْمَشْرِقُ وَٱلْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا۟ فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ ٱللَّهِ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾﴾

(سورة البقرة: ١١٥)

2:115. To Allah belong the east and the west, so wherever you turn, there is the Countenance of Allah. For Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.

The east and the west are singled out for mention here because they are the focal point of great signs, at which lights rise and set. So if Allah is in control of them, then He is in control of all directions.

﴿so wherever you turn﴾ that is, whatever direction you face, if your taking of that particular direction is based on His command, then one of the following scenarios must apply:

Either He instructed you to face towards the Kaaba after you had been enjoined to face towards Bayt al-Maqdis;

or you are enjoined to pray whilst travelling on your mounts and the like, in which case the qibla is whatever direction a person is facing;

or an individual was confused about the qibla, and tried his best to work it out and pray in that direction, then he found out that he had got it wrong;

or he is excused because he is being subjected to corporal punishment or he is sick and the like.

In all of these cases, the individual is either excused or is given particular instructions.

Whatever the case, whatever direction he takes cannot be beyond the dominion of his Lord.

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﴾there is the Countenance of Allah. For Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing﴿. This is affirmation that Allah (ﷻ) does indeed have a Countenance or Face, in a manner that is befitting to Him, and that Allah has a Face that is not like the faces of His creation. Allah (ﷻ) is All-Encompassing in His grace and to Him belong all sublime attributes, and He knows what is in your hearts and your intentions.

Because He is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing, He has made things easy for you. To Him be all praise and thanks.

 

﴿وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَانَهُ بَل لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلٌّ لَّهُ قَانِتُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾ بَدِيعُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُن فَيَكُونُ ﴿١١٧﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١١٦-١١٧)

2:116. They say: Allah has taken unto Himself a son. Glory be to Him. Nay, to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth; everything is subservient unto Him.

2:117. [He is] the Originator of the heavens and the earth: When He decrees a matter, He merely says to it, 'Be!' and it is.

﴾They﴿ that is, the Jews, Christians and polytheists, and those who hold similar views

﴾say: Allah has taken unto Himself a son﴿. They attributed to Him that which is not befitting to His Majesty, thus committing a grievous offence and wronging themselves. But Allah (ﷻ) responds to them with patience and forbearance, and grants them well-being and provision even though they say such terrible things that are contrary to His glory.

﴾Glory be to Him﴿ – this is declaring Him to be holy and far above everything that the polytheists and transgressors attribute to Him that

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is not befitting to His Majesty. Glory be to the One Who is possessed of absolute perfection in all aspects and is not lacking in any way.

As well as refuting what they say, Allah establishes proof that He is far above that, as He says: ﴿Nay, to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth﴾ that is, all of them are His possessions and slaves, and He disposes of their affairs in the manner of a master with his slaves; they are subservient to Him and subject to His control. As they are all His slaves and in need of Him, whereas He has no need of them, how can any of them be His son, when a son is inevitably of the same type as his father, because he is part of him?

Allah (ﷻ) is the Subduer and the Sovereign, and you are subservient slaves; He is Independent of means and you are in need of Him. So how, despite all this, can He have a son? This is the most abominable falsehood.

Being subservient to Allah is of two types: in a general sense, it means that all of creation is under His control; in a specific sense, it means worshipping Him alone.

Then He says: ﴿[He is] the Originator of the heavens and the earth﴾ that is, He is their Creator Who created them in a perfect manner without any precedent.
﴿When He decrees a matter, He merely says to it, 'Be!' and it is﴾; nothing can be too difficult for Him or be beyond His capability.




﴿وَقَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ لَوْلَا يُكَلِّمُنَا ٱللَّهُ أَوْ تَأْتِينَآ ءَايَةٌ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ قَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِم مِّثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ ۘ تَشَٰبَهَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ ۗ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا ٱلْءَايَٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ إِنَّآ أَرْسَلْنَٰكَ بِٱلْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا ۖ وَلَا تُسْـَٔلُ عَنْ أَصْحَٰبِ ٱلْجَحِيمِ ﴿١١٩﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١١٨-١١٩)

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2:118. Those who have no knowledge say: If only Allah would speak to us or some sign would come to us. The people who came before them said something similar; their hearts are all much the same. We have made the signs clear to those who have certain faith.

2:119. Verily We have sent you with the truth as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner, but you will not be asked about the inhabitants of the blazing fire.

That is, the ignorant among the People of the Book and others say: Why does Allah not speak to us as He spoke to the Messengers? ﴿or some sign would come to us﴾ referring to signs that they suggest or demand on the basis of their corrupt thinking and worthless ideas, by means of which they showed audacity towards the Creator and arrogance towards His Messengers. This is like when they said:

﴿...We will never believe in you until we see Allah with our own eyes...﴾ *(al-Baqarah 2: 55)*

﴿The People of the Book ask you to bring down for them a book from heaven. Indeed, they asked Moosâ for something even greater than that...﴾ *(an-Nisâ' 4: 153)*

﴿...Why has an angel not been sent down to him, to be a warner with him? Or why is not some treasure thrown down to him, or why does he not have a garden from which to eat?...﴾ *(al-Furqân 25: 7-8)*

﴿They say: We will never believe in you until you cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us.﴾ *(al-Isrâ' 17: 90)*

This is how they were with their Messengers: they would ask for signs by way of causing annoyance and out of stubbornness, not by way of seeking signs so that they might be guided. Their aim was not to clarify the truth, because the Messengers had already brought such signs that lead people to believe. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿We have made the signs clear to those who have certain faith﴾. Everyone

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who had certain faith had already come to know, from the clear signs and proof of Allah, that by means of which he developed certainty and warded off doubts.

This is followed by some concise, brief verses that prove the truthfulness of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the soundness of his message: ﴿Verily We have sent you with the truth as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner﴾. This includes the signs that he brought, which may be summed up in three things: the message itself; his attitude and conduct; and that which he brought of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

The first and second are included in the words ﴿Verily We have sent you﴾ and the third is included in the words ﴿with the truth﴾.

With regard to the first, which is the message itself, the state of the earth's population before the Prophet (ﷺ) came is well established: they used to worship idols, fire and the cross, and they had altered their religions until they were sinking in the darkness of disbelief, which had encompassed and overwhelmed them, apart from some remnants of the People of the Book who had vanished shortly before the Prophet's mission began.

It is known that Allah (ﷻ) did not create humanity in vain and He did not neglect or forsake them, because He is Most Wise, All-Knowing, Mighty and Most Merciful. By His wisdom and His mercy towards His slaves, He sent this great Messenger (ﷺ) to them, to enjoin worship of the Most Gracious alone, with no partner or associate. Hence by examining his message, the wise person will realise that it is a message of truth, as well as a tremendous sign that he is indeed the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

With regard to the second matter, anyone who comes to know the Prophet (ﷺ) properly and learns of his character and teachings before his mission began, how he grew up with the best of characteristics, which only increased in nobility and greatness, will realise that this can be nothing other than the character of the perfect Prophets,

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because Allah (ﷻ) has made the individual's attitude and character the foremost means of knowing that person and the greatest proof of whether he is sincere or lying.

With regard to the third matter, which is knowing what the Prophet (ﷺ) brought of laws and the Holy Qur'an, which contains true stories and enjoins good and forbids all kinds of evil, as well as astonishing miracles, all the signs that indicate that he truly is a Prophet of Allah are included in these three categories.

﴿a bearer of glad tidings﴾ that is, glad tidings of blessings and happiness in this world and in the hereafter, to those who obey you ﴿and a warner﴾ of misery and doom in this world and in the hereafter, to those who disobey you.
﴿but you will not be asked about the inhabitants of the blazing fire﴾ that is, you are not responsible for them; your duty is only to convey the message, and the reckoning is for Us.




﴿وَلَن تَرْضَىٰ عَنكَ ٱلْيَهُودُ وَلَا ٱلنَّصَٰرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ ۗ قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَى ٱللَّهِ هُوَ ٱلْهُدَىٰ ۗ وَلَئِنِ ٱتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَآءَهُم بَعْدَ ٱلَّذِى جَآءَكَ مِنَ ٱلْعِلْمِ ۙ مَا لَكَ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ مِن وَلِىٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١٢٠﴾﴾

(سورة البقرة: ١٢٠)

2:120. The Jews and the Christians will never be pleased with you until you follow their religion. Say: Verily the guidance of Allah is the [only] guidance. If you were to follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, then you would have neither protector nor helper against Allah.

Here Allah tells His Messenger (ﷺ) that the Jews and Christians will never be pleased with him unless he follows their religion, because they call people to the religion which they themselves are following,

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claiming that it is truth. So say to them: ﴿Verily the guidance of Allah﴾ with which I have been sent ﴿is the [only] guidance﴾.

With regard to what they are following, it is whims and desires, based on the fact that Allah then says: ﴿If you were to follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, then you would have neither protector nor helper against Allah﴾.

This represents stern instructions not to follow the whims and desires of the Jews and Christians, or to imitate them in that which is exclusive to their religions. Although this is addressed to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), his Ummah is also included in that, because what matters is the general application of the verse, regardless of whom it specifically addresses, just as what matters is the general meaning of the text, not the specific reason for which it is given.

﴿ٱلَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَٰهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ يَتْلُونَهُۥ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِۦٓ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِۦ ۗ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِهِۦ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْخَٰسِرُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾ يَٰبَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ ٱذْكُرُوا۟ نِعْمَتِىَ ٱلَّتِىٓ أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّى فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ يَوْمًا لَّا تَجْزِى نَفْسٌ عَن نَّفْسٍ شَيْـًٔا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا تَنفَعُهَا شَفَٰعَةٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٢١-١٢٣)

2:121. Those to whom We have sent the Book read it as it should be read; they are the ones who [truly] believe in it. And those who disbelieve in it, they are the losers.

2:122. O Children of Israel, remember the blessing I bestowed upon you, and that I favoured you over all other nations.

2:123. Then fear a day when no soul will avail another, no compensation will be accepted from it, no intercession will benefit it nor will they be helped.

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Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that those to whom He sent the Book and on whom He bestowed His great favour, ﴿read it as it should be read﴾ that is, they follow it as it should be followed. Reading (*tilâwah*, *lit.* recitation) may mean following. So they regard as permissible that which it permits, they regard as forbidden that which it forbids, they act upon its clear and unambiguous verses, and they believe in its ambiguous verses. These are the ones among the People of the Book who are blessed, those who acknowledge the blessings of Allah and give thanks for them; they believe in all the Messengers and do not differentiate between any of them.

These are the true believers, not those among them who said: ﴿We believe in that which was revealed to us; yet they disbelieve in that which came after it﴾ *(2: 91)*. Hence, Allah warned them by saying: ﴿And those who disbelieve in it, they are the losers.﴾ *(2: 121)*.

We have discussed previously the commentary on the following verse.




﴿ ۞ وَإِذِ ٱبْتَلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ رَبُّهُۥ بِكَلِمَٰتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ ۖ قَالَ إِنِّى جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا ۖ قَالَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِى ۖ قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِى ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا ٱلْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا ۖ وَٱتَّخِذُوا۟ مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ مُصَلًّى ۖ وَعَهِدْنَآ إِلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ وَإِسْمَٰعِيلَ أَن طَهِّرَا بَيْتِىَ لِلطَّآئِفِينَ وَٱلْعَٰكِفِينَ وَٱلرُّكَّعِ ٱلسُّجُودِ ﴿١٢٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٢٤-١٢٥)

2:124. And [remember] when Ibrâheem was tested by his Lord with certain commands, which he fulfilled. He [Allah] said: I will make you a leader of people. He said: And also from among my progeny? He said: My covenant does not extend to the transgressors.

2:125. And [remember] when We made the House a focal point for the people, and a sanctuary [and said]: Take the Station of Ibrâheem

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as a place of prayer. We commanded Ibrâheem and Ismâ'eel, that they should purify My House for those who circumambulate it or stay there [for worship], or bow or prostrate there.

Here Allah tells us about His slave and close friend Ibrâheem (ﷺ), whose leadership and virtue are universally acknowledged and whom all the groups of the People of the Book, and even the polytheists, claim as a leader. Allah tells us that He tried and tested him with certain commands and prohibitions, which is how Allah usually tests His slaves, to highlight those who are insincere and cannot be steadfast at the time of trial, and to demonstrate those who are sincere and will be elevated in status by means of the test, their deeds will be purified and they will be cleansed of sin. One of the greatest of them in this regard is Ibrâheem (ﷺ).

He did what Allah commanded him to do, properly and perfectly. Allah appreciated that and He still appreciates it, as He said: ﴿I will make you a leader of people﴾ that is, they will follow your example and your guidance, and will walk behind you to their eternal bliss; you will be highly thought of forever, you will attain a great reward and you will be venerated by everyone.

This, surely, is the highest status for which people may compete and strive hard, the greatest achievement of the Messengers of firm resolve and each sincere follower of theirs who is calling to Allah and to His way.

When Ibrâheem attained that high status, he sought that for his descendants too, so that his status and that of his descendants would become even higher. This is also a reflection of his leadership, his sincerity towards the slaves of Allah and his desire to increase the numbers of those who lead others on the straight path; how great was his ambition and status.

Allah answered his prayer and told him of the reason why some may be prevented from attaining this status, as He said: ﴿My covenant

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does not extend to the transgressors﴾. What is meant is: leadership in religion cannot be attained by one who wrongs and harms himself and brings himself down, because transgression is contrary to this status, which can only be attained by means of patience and strong faith. In other words, those who will be qualified to attain this status will be those who have a high level of faith, do a great deal of righteous deeds and are possessed of good characteristics, a good attitude, and complete love of Allah, fearing Him and turning to Him. How could a transgressor attain such a status? The implicit meaning of this verse is that anyone other than the transgressor may attain a position of leadership, but only after meeting its conditions.

Then Allah (ﷻ) refers to a lasting sign that is indicative of Ibrâheem's leadership, which is this sacred House, pilgrimage to which is one of the five pillars of Islam, a means of erasing sin.

In that House we see the legacy of Ibrâheem and his descendants, which offers proof of his leadership and reminds us of how he was. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And [remember] when We made the House a focal point for the people﴾ that is, a place to which they return to attain religious and worldly benefits; it is a place that they frequent and never tire of it.

﴿and a sanctuary﴾ that is, it is a place where everyone feels safe, even wild animals and inanimate things such as trees.

Hence during the jâhiliyah, despite their polytheism, the people venerated it immensely, to such a degree that if a man found his father's killer in the sanctuary, he would not disturb him. When Islam came, it further emphasised the sanctity, veneration and honour of the House.

﴿Take the Station of Ibrâheem as a place of prayer﴾. It may be that what is meant here is the well-known Maqâm (Station), the position of which now is in front of the door of the Kaaba, where two *raka'ât* are prayed following *ṭawâf* (circumambulation of the Kaaba), which it is recommended to offer behind the Station of Ibrâheem. This is

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the view of the majority of commentators. It may also be understood as referring to all the places where Ibrâheem stood or halted during Hajj, which refers to all the rituals, namely ṭawâf (circumambulation of the Kaaba), *sa'iy* (going between Ṣafâ and Marwah), standing in 'Arafah and Muzdalifah, stoning the *jamarât* (stone pillars), offering the sacrifice, and other actions that are done during Hajj.

Hence what is meant by the words ﴿a place of prayer﴾ is a place of worship; in other words, follow his example in the rituals of Hajj. It may be that this is a more appropriate meaning, because that would also include the first meaning (the two raka'ât following ṭawâf), and the wording may indicate that.

﴿We commanded Ibrâheem and Ismâ'eel, that they should purify My House﴾ that is, We revealed to them and instructed them to purify the House of Allah, ridding it of all traces of polytheism, disbelief, sin, abomination, impurities and filth, so that it might be ﴿for those who circumambulate it﴾ and ﴿stay there [for worship], or bow or prostrate there﴾ that is, those who pray there. Ṭawâf is mentioned first, because it is unique to al-Masjid al-Ḥarâm; that is followed by mention of staying there (for worship), which is known as *i'tikâf* (devotional retreat), one of the conditions of which is that it should be done in a mosque. Prayer is mentioned last, although it is a superior act, because it is not specific to the mosque and may be offered anywhere.

Allah attributed the House to Himself for several reasons, such as the following:

- So that Ibrâheem and Ismâ'eel would pay extra attention to purifying it, because it is the House of Allah, so they would strive hard and do their utmost.
- The fact that it is described as Allah's House is a sign of honour; this is an implicit instruction to His slaves to venerate and honour it.
- The fact that it is connected to Allah is what makes people's hearts attached to it.

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﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمُ رَبِّ ٱجْعَلْ هَٰذَا بَلَدًا ءَامِنًا وَٱرْزُقْ أَهْلَهُۥ مِنَ ٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ مَنْ ءَامَنَ مِنْهُم بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ ۖ قَالَ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَأُمَتِّعُهُۥ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ أَضْطَرُّهُۥٓ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ ٱلنَّارِ ۖ وَبِئْسَ ٱلْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٢٦﴾﴾

(سورة البقرة: ١٢٦)

2:126. And [remember] when Ibrâheem said: My Lord, make this a city of peace, and provide its people with fruits, those among them who believe in Allah and the Last Day. [Allah] said: As for those who disbelieve, I will grant them enjoyment for a short while, but then I will drive them towards the punishment of the fire; what a hapless journey's end.

That is, remember when Ibrâheem prayed for this House and its environs, that Allah should make it a city of peace and provide its people with various kinds of fruits, then he limited this supplication to the believers, out of appropriate manners before Allah, because his first request concerning leadership had been general (in the sense that he prayed for all of his offspring) and the response had been limited to those other than the transgressors among them.

Hence when he prayed for provision for them, he limited it to the believers, although the provision of Allah encompasses believers and disbelievers, disobedient and obedient. Allah said: ﴿As for those who disbelieve﴾ that is, I shall grant provision to all of them, Muslims and disbelievers alike; as for the Muslims, they will use that provision to help them in worshipping Allah, then they will move from that to the delights of paradise; as for the disbelievers, they will enjoy it for a short while

﴿but then I will drive them﴾ that is, force them and bring them reluctantly

﴿towards the punishment of the fire; what a hapless journey's end﴾.

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﴿وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمُ ٱلْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ ٱلْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَٰعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّآ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٢٧﴾ رَبَّنَا وَٱجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمَيْنِ لَكَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِنَآ أُمَّةً مُّسْلِمَةً لَّكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَآ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلتَّوَّابُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٢٨﴾ رَبَّنَا وَٱبْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا۟ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَٰتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٢٩﴾﴾

(سورة البقرة: ١٢٧-١٢٩)

2:127. And [remember] when Ibrâheem and Ismâ'eel raised the walls of the House [saying]: Our Lord! Accept [this] from us, for You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.

2:128. Our Lord! Make us both Muslims submitting to You, and of our descendants a nation that is Muslim, submitting to You; and teach us our rituals [of pilgrimage]; and accept our repentance, for You are the Accepter of repentance, the Most Merciful.

2:129. Our Lord, send to them a Messenger from among them, who will recite Your revelations to them, teach them the Book and wisdom, and purify them; for You are the Almighty, the Most Wise.

That is, remember Ibrâheem and Ismâ'eel, when they were building the walls of the House from the foundation upwards, and how they persisted in this great task with an attitude of both fear and hope. Whilst they were striving to complete this task, they prayed to Allah to accept their deeds from them, so that it might be a blessing for all.

They prayed for themselves, and for their offspring to be Muslim; what this signifies is humility in the heart and submission to Allah, which is reflected in outward behaviour.

﴿and teach us our rituals [of pilgrimage]﴾ that is, show us, demonstrate them before us so that we may see them, because seeing is more effective for the purpose of learning. It may be that what is

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meant by rituals (*manâsik*) is all the actions of Hajj, as indicated by the context and story, or it may be that the meaning is more general than that, and refers to all of Islam and all acts of worship, as indicated by the general meaning; the word *nusuk* (rituals, from the same root as manâsik) originally means worship, but came to be used primarily in reference to the acts of worship performed during Hajj. Thus what they meant by their supplication was to be guided and enabled to acquire beneficial knowledge and to do righteous deeds. As it is the case that human beings – no matter how hard they try – will always fall short and need to repent, they (Ibrâheem and Ismâ'eel) said: ﴿and accept our repentance, for You are the Accepter of repentance, the Most Merciful﴾.

﴿Our Lord, send to them a Messenger from among them﴾ that is, to all our descendants, so as to increase them in status and so that they will know him properly and follow him.
﴿who will recite Your revelations to them﴾ and teach them the words ﴿teach them the Book and wisdom﴾ and teach them the meanings.
﴿and purify them﴾ by guiding them to do righteous deeds and to rid themselves of evil deeds because of which the soul cannot be purified unless one rids oneself of them.
﴿for You are the Almighty﴾ that is, the Subduer of all things, Whose power none can resist
﴿the Most Wise﴾ Who puts things in the right place. I implore You by Your glory, might and wisdom, to send among them this Messenger. Allah answered their prayer and sent this noble Messenger, by means of whom Allah had mercy on his descendants in particular, and on all of humankind in general. Hence the Prophet (ﷺ) said:
«I am the answer to the prayer of my father Ibrâheem.» (Recorded and authenticated by Ibn Katheer)

Because Allah showed this great respect to Ibrâheem and told us of his perfect qualities, He said:

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﴿وَمَن يَرْغَبُ عَن مِّلَّةِ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ إِلَّا مَن سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُۥ ۚ وَلَقَدِ ٱصْطَفَيْنَٰهُ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ وَإِنَّهُۥ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ لَمِنَ ٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُۥ رَبُّهُۥٓ أَسْلِمْ ۖ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَآ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ يَٰبَنِىَّ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱصْطَفَىٰ لَكُمُ ٱلدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ أَمْ كُنتُمْ شُهَدَآءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ ٱلْمَوْتُ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنۢ بَعْدِى قَالُوا۟ نَعْبُدُ إِلَٰهَكَ وَإِلَٰهَ ءَابَآئِكَ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ وَإِسْمَٰعِيلَ وَإِسْحَٰقَ إِلَٰهًا وَٰحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُۥ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ ۖ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُم مَّا كَسَبْتُمْ ۖ وَلَا تُسْـَٔلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٤﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٣٠-١٣٤)

2:130. And who turns away from the religion of Ibrâheem but one who debases himself with folly? We chose him in this world, and in the hereafter he will be among the righteous.

2:131. [Remember] when his Lord said to him: Submit [to Me], he said: I submit to the Lord of the worlds.

2:132. And Ibrâheem enjoined his sons to do the same, as did Ya'qoob [saying]: O my sons, Allah has chosen this religion for you; so do not die except as Muslims.

2:133. Or were you present when death came to Ya'qoob? He said to his sons: What will you worship after I am gone? They said: We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, of Ibrâheem, Ismâ'eel and Is-ḥâq, One God, and To Him we submit [as Muslims].

2:134. That is a nation which has [already] passed away; they will have what they earned and you will have what you earn, and you will not be questioned about what they used to do.

That is, no one turns away ﴿from the religion of Ibrâheem﴾ after coming to know of his virtues

﴿but one who debases himself with folly﴾ that is, he transgresses against himself and humiliates himself, accepting for himself that

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which is inferior, and he sold his soul for a cheap price. By the same token, there is no one who is wiser or more mature than one who follows the religion of Ibrâheem. Then Allah tells us of Ibrâheem's status in this world and the hereafter:

﴿We chose him in this world﴾ that is, We selected him and guided him to do good deeds, by virtue of which he became one of the chosen and truly good *(cf. 38: 47)*.

﴿and in the hereafter he will be among the righteous﴾ who will have the highest status.

﴿[Remember] when his Lord said to him: Submit [to Me], he said﴾ in obedience to his Lord: ﴿I submit to the Lord of the worlds﴾ with sincerity, affirming His oneness, out of love for Him and turning to Him. So tawḥeed (affirming the oneness of Allah) became his defining characteristic.

Then he passed down that legacy of tawḥeed (pure monotheism) to his descendants, enjoining it upon them and leaving it as a word to endure among those who came after him, that they might turn back (to Allah) *(cf. 43: 28)*. Thus it was handed down from one to another, until it reached Ya'qoob, who enjoined it upon his sons.

So you – O sons of Ya'qoob – see that your father enjoined it upon you in particular, so you are obliged to submit completely and follow the Seal of the Prophets, as Ya'qoob said:

﴿O my sons, Allah has chosen this religion for you﴾ that is, He selected it for you, out of mercy and kindness towards you, so adhere to it, follow it and mould your character in accordance with its teachings, so that you may persist in that; and do not let death come to you except when you are adhering to that, because whoever lives his life following something will die in that state, and whoever dies following something will be resurrected in the same state.

As the Jews claimed to be following the religion of Ibrâheem, and of Ya'qoob after him, Allah said, denouncing them:

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﴿Or were you present when death came to Ya'qoob?﴾ And he said to his sons, by way of testing them and so as to have the joy of certainty whilst he was still alive that they would adhere to what he enjoined upon them:

﴿What will you worship after I am gone?﴾ They answered him in a way that brought him joy, as they said:

﴿We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, of Ibrâheem, Ismâ'eel and Is-ḥâq, One God﴾ and we will not associate anything with Him or regard anyone as equal to Him

﴿and to Him we submit [as Muslims]﴾. Thus they combined monotheism with righteous deeds.

It is well known that they (the Jews of Madinah) were not present when Ya'qoob died, because they did not yet exist. As they were not present, Allah tells us that he (Ya'qoob) enjoined his sons to follow the path of monotheism, not Judaism.

Then Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿That is a nation which has [already] passed away﴾ and no longer exists

﴿they will have what they earned and you will have what you earn﴾ that is, each person has his own deeds and will be requited according to what he did; no one will be brought to account for the sin of another and no one will benefit except from his own faith and piety. So your preoccupation with them and your claims that you are following their religion, and your being content with mere words are matters that do not make sense, because there is no reality to them. Rather what you must do is examine your own situation and see whether it will help you to attain salvation or not.

 

﴿وَقَالُوا۟ كُونُوا۟ هُودًا أَوْ نَصَٰرَىٰ تَهْتَدُوا۟ ۗ قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ حَنِيفًا ۖ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٣٥﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٣٥)

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2:135. They say: Become Jews or Christians, then you will be rightly guided. Say: Rather the religion of Ibrâheem the monotheist, and he was not one of those who ascribe partners to Allah.

That is, both the Jews and the Christians called upon the Muslims to enter their religion, claiming that they were the ones who were truly guided and others were misguided. So say to him, answering in a clear way so as to settle the matter: ﴿Rather﴾ we follow ﴿the religion of Ibrâheem the monotheist﴾ that is, turning to Allah alone and turning away from everything other than Him, on the basis of adhering to monotheistic belief and shunning polytheism. This is the one in following whom there is guidance, and turning away from his religion constitutes disbelief and misguidance.

 

﴿قُولُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا بِٱللَّهِ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡنَا وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰٓ إِبۡرَٰهِـۧمَ وَإِسۡمَٰعِيلَ وَإِسۡحَٰقَ وَيَعۡقُوبَ وَٱلۡأَسۡبَاطِ وَمَآ أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَآ أُوتِيَ ٱلنَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمۡ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيۡنَ أَحَدٖ مِّنۡهُمۡ وَنَحۡنُ لَهُۥ مُسۡلِمُونَ ١٣٦﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٣٦)

2:136. Say: We believe in Allah, and that which has been sent down to us, and that which was sent down to Ibrâheem, Ismâ'eel, Is-ḥâq, Ya'qoob, and the tribes, and that which was given to Moosâ and 'Eesâ, and that which was given to [all] Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between one and another of them, and to Him we have submitted [in Islam].

This verse includes everything that one must believe in. It should be noted that *eemân* (faith or belief) refers to complete affirmation in the heart of these principles, an affirmation that includes both deeds of the heart (that is, beliefs and emotions) and physical actions. In that sense eemân includes Islam and it includes all righteous deeds,

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which are part of and a reflection of eemân. Whenever the word 'eemân' is mentioned on its own, it includes everything mentioned above. Similarly, when the word 'Islam' appears on its own, it includes eemân. When the two words are mentioned together, eemân refers to what is in the heart of belief and affirmation, and Islam refers to outward physical deeds. The same applies when eemân and righteous deeds are mentioned together.

The word ﴿Say﴾ means speak verbally that which is in accordance with what is in your hearts. This is what brings reward, because just as uttering words without belief in the heart is hypocrisy and disbelief, by the same token, mere words that have no basis in belief have no impact and are of little benefit. Even though the individual will still be rewarded for saying good words, if they are good and he basically believes, there is still a difference between mere words and that which is based on deeds of the heart (strong faith and good intentions).

The word ﴿Say﴾ refers to announcing one's belief openly and calling people to it, because this is the foundation of religion.

﴿We believe﴾ – here the action is attributed to the entire Ummah (as it appears in the plural form), which indicates that it is obligatory for the Ummah to hold fast, all together, to the rope of Allah, and encourages them to be united so that their call will be one and their efforts will be united. This implies that the Ummah should not be divided and that the believers are like a single body.

﴿Say: We believe in Allah...﴾. These words indicate that it is permissible for a person to attribute faith to himself in a specific manner (namely, belief in Allah); rather it is obligatory to do so, which is different than saying "I am a believer" and the like, because no one should say any such thing without adding the words *in shâ' Allâh* (if Allah wills), because otherwise it may come under the heading of praising oneself and testifying that one has faith.

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﴿We believe in Allah﴾ means we believe that He exists, is One, has all the attributes of perfection, is above all shortcomings and defects, is the only One Who is deserving of all worship and no partners are to be ascribed to Him in any way whatsoever.

﴿and that which has been sent down to us﴾ – this includes the Qur'an and the Sunnah, because Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...For Allah has sent down to you the Book and wisdom...﴾ *(an-Nisâ' 4: 113)*

Thus it includes belief in what the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) tell us about the attributes of Allah, the attributes of His Messengers, the Last Day, and the unseen, both past and future, and what they (the Qur'an and Sunnah) include of Islamic rulings, *ḥadd*[12] punishments and so on.

﴿and that which was sent down to Ibrâheem...﴾. This points to belief in all the Books that were sent down to all the Prophets, as well as belief in the Prophets in general and those whose names are mentioned in this verse in particular, because of their high status and the fact that they received major laws. What is required with regard to belief in the Prophets and Books is that we should believe in them in general terms, and with regard to those about whom one learns more details, we must believe in them in detail.

﴿We make no distinction between one and another of them﴾ that is, we believe in all of them. This is something that is unique to the Muslims, who alone have this belief, as opposed to those who claim to be followers of other religions. Even though the Jews, Christians, Sabians and others claim to believe in some of the Messengers and Books, they disbelieve in others and make distinctions between the Messengers and Books, believing in some and not in others. This proves that their belief is invalid, because the Messenger in whom

[12] ḥadd (pl. *ḥudood*): Specific punishments prescribed in Sharia for specific offences such as theft and fornication.

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they claim to believe affirmed all of the Messengers, especially Muhammad (ﷺ). So if they disbelieve in Muhammad (ﷺ), then they have disbelieved and rejected what their Messenger told them, so they have rejected their Messenger.

﴿and that which was given to [all] Prophets from their Lord﴾. This indicates that the gift of religious commitment is the true gift that is connected to happiness in this world and in the hereafter. Allah did not instruct us to believe in what was given to the Prophets of authority, wealth and the like; rather He commanded us to believe in what they were given of scriptures and laws.

This verse also teaches us that the Prophets conveyed the message from Allah and were intermediaries between Allah and His creation in conveying His religion; they had nothing else to do with it.

The phrase ﴿from their Lord﴾ indicates that as part of His perfect Lordship and care towards His slaves, He sent the Books down to them and sent the Messengers to them. His Lordship dictates that He should not neglect or ignore them.

If what was given to the Prophets only came to them from their Lord, then this shows the difference between true Prophets and imposters; we can tell the difference simply by knowing what they call people to, for the Messengers only call people to good and they only forbid everything that is evil. Moreover, each of them confirms the others, testifying that they told the truth, with no contradiction because it is all from their Lord.

﴿...If it [the Qur'an] had been from anyone other than Allah, they would surely have found therein many contradictions.﴾ *(an-Nisâ' 4: 82)*

This is in contrast to those who falsely claim to be prophets; there will inevitably be contradictions in the stories they tell and in what they enjoin and forbid; this will be quite clear to anyone who examines their cases and finds out what they advocated.

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As Allah has explained everything that is to be believed in, in general and specific terms, and as mere words are not sufficient unless accompanied by actions, He said: ﴿and to Him we have submitted [in Islam]﴾ that is, we have submitted to His greatness and we worship Him alone, both inwardly and outwardly, sincere to Him in worship.

This verse, although it is very brief and concise, refers to the three types of tawḥeed: tawḥeed ar-ruboobiyah (affirmation of the oneness of the divine Lordship), tawḥeed al-uloohiyah (affirmation of the oneness of divinity), and tawḥeed al-asmâ' waṣ-ṣifât (affirmation of the oneness of the divine names and attributes). It also includes belief in all the Messengers and all the Books. After mentioning the Prophets in general, then mentioning some by name, it points to the superiority of those who are named. It also refers to belief in the heart that is reflected in words and deeds; sincerity to Allah alone; the difference between true Messengers and impostors who claim to be prophets; how Allah teaches His slaves what to say; His mercy and kindness towards them by bestowing all kinds of religious blessings upon them that are connected to their happiness in this world and the hereafter. Glory be to the One Who made His Book explain all things, and made it a guidance and mercy to the believers.

 

﴿فَإِنْ ءَامَنُوا۟ بِمِثْلِ مَآ ءَامَنتُم بِهِۦ فَقَدِ ٱهْتَدَوا۟ ۖ وَإِن تَوَلَّوْا۟ فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِى شِقَاقٍ ۖ فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ ۚ وَهُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٣٧﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٣٧)

2:137. So if they believe as you believe, then they are rightly guided; but if they turn away, then it is they who are entrenched in opposition; but Allah will suffice you against them, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.

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That is, if the People of the Book ﴿believe as you believe﴾, O believers, in all the Messengers and all the Books, foremost among whom, and the final and the best of them, is Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Qur'an, and they submit to Allah alone and do not differentiate between any of the Messengers of Allah, ﴿then they are rightly guided﴾ to the straight path which leads to paradise. In other words, there is no other way for them to be guided except by means of this faith; it is not as they claim: ﴿Become Jews or Christians, then you will be rightly guided﴾ *(2: 135)*. They claim that guidance is only to be found in their religion, but guidance means knowing the truth and acting upon it, the opposite of which is misguidance by failing to acquire knowledge and misguidance by failing to act upon the knowledge acquired. This is the opposition in which they were entrenched, as they turned away. The one who is entrenched in opposition is the one who is on one side whilst Allah and His Messenger are on the other side; this opposition in which they are entrenched means hostility and extreme enmity, which in turn dictates that they would strive their utmost to harm the Messenger. Hence Allah promised His Messenger that He would suffice him against them, because He is All-Hearing Who hears all voices, despite their different languages and the varying needs of people; and He is All-Knowing, Who knows what is before them and what is behind them, He knows the unseen and the seen, He knows what is apparent and what is hidden. As this is the case, then Allah will suffice you against their evil. And Allah did indeed fulfil His promise to His Messenger and gave him power over them, so that he killed some of them, took some of them captive and expelled others, banishing them in all directions.

This is one of the miracles of the Qur'an, which was foretelling an event before it happened, which then unfolded as foretold.

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﴿صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً وَنَحْنُ لَهُ عَابِدُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٣٨)

2:138. [Our religion] takes its colour from Allah, and who can give a better colour than Allah? And it is He Whom we worship.

That is, adhere to the colour given by Allah, which is His religion, and follow it completely, both inwardly and outwardly, with all of its beliefs, at all times, so that it will become like a colour for you, one of your characteristics. Once it becomes one of your characteristics, then you will follow its instructions willingly and lovingly, and religious commitment will become second nature to you, like the colour of a garment which has become an integral part of it. Thus you will attain happiness in this world and the hereafter, because Islam encourages good characteristics, good deeds and sublime aims. Hence Allah says, by way of making people think: ﴿and who can give a better colour than Allah?﴾ that is, there is no better colour than that which He gives.

If you want to know some examples that highlight the difference between the colour given by Allah and others, then compare a thing with its opposite. What do you think of a person who has a sound belief in his Lord, which has an impact on his attitude and behaviour, so that he continues to acquire all good characteristics and do all good deeds, conducting himself in the best manner and abandoning all bad characteristics, immoral deeds and shameful actions, so that he has the character of sincerity in word and deed and is patient, forbearing, dignified, courageous, kind in word and deed, loving Allah, fearing His punishment and hoping for His reward? Such a one has the attitude of sincerity towards Allah and kindness towards his slaves.

Then compare him to a person who disbelieves in his Lord, turns away from Him and turns instead to other, created beings. Thus he

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acquires bad characteristics, such as disbelief, polytheism, lying, treachery, deceit, cheating, lack of dignity and mistreating people in word and deed. Such a one has no sincerity towards Allah and shows no kindness to His slaves.

Thus it will become clear to you that there is a great difference between the two, and you will clearly see that there is no colour better than that given by Allah. This in turn implies that there is no colour that is worse or uglier than that of the one who colours himself with something other than the colour given by Allah and follows a religion other than His.

﴿And it is He Whom we worship﴾. This further explains that colour, which is adhering to these two principles, namely sincerity towards Allah and following (the Qur'an and Sunnah), because worship is a word that includes everything that Allah loves and is pleased with of actions, words, attitudes and beliefs, and it cannot be pleasing to Him unless it was prescribed by Allah on the lips of His Messenger (ﷺ). Sincerity means doing these actions for the sake of Allah alone. The structure of this sentence in Arabic indicates that worship is exclusively for Allah alone, and that this worship is to be done persistently and on an ongoing basis, to indicate that this is a characteristic that is like a colour that remains with them all the time.

 

﴿ قُلْ أَتُحَآجُّونَنَا فِي ٱللَّهِ وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ وَلَنَآ أَعْمَٰلُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَٰلُكُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُۥ مُخْلِصُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٣٩)

2:139. Say: Would you dispute with us about Allah, when He is our Lord and your Lord? We have our deeds and you have your deeds, and we are sincerely devoted to Him.

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What is meant by dispute is an argument between two or more people having to do with a controversial matter, in which each disputant is trying to support his own view and nullify that of his opponent, each of them striving to establish proof to that effect. What is required when engaging in dispute is to do it in the best manner, by keeping it brief in a way that could bring the misguided back to the right path, establish proof against the stubborn, clarify the truth and shed light on falsehood. If the argument develops and goes beyond these bounds, then it becomes pointless, an argument that does not lead to anything good, and it may in fact lead to some negative consequences.

The People of the Book claimed that they were closer to Allah than the Muslims, but this was a mere claim that required proof and evidence. If the Lord of all is One and He is not your Lord alone to the exclusion of us, and both we and you have our deeds, then we and you are equal in that regard. This means that neither of the two parties is closer to Allah than the other, because differentiating when you are equal in a particular matter, without there being anything to differentiate between you, is a false claim; differentiating between two who are equal is obviously stubborn and arrogant. Rather what makes one superior to the other is sincerity towards Allah alone in righteous deeds, and this is something that is a characteristic of the believers only. Therefore they are closer to Allah than others, because sincerity is the way to salvation. This is the difference between the close friends of Allah and the close friends of the Shaytân, on the basis of the characteristics that truly matter and are recognised by people of reason, and are only disputed by those who are arrogant and ignorant. In this verse, we see a subtle hint which guides us to the best way to present our case in an argument; it also tells us that matters are based on noticing the similarities and differences between two things.

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﴿أَمْ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ وَإِسْمَٰعِيلَ وَإِسْحَٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَٱلْأَسْبَاطَ كَانُوا۟ هُودًا أَوْ نَصَٰرَىٰ ۗ قُلْ ءَأَنتُمْ أَعْلَمُ أَمِ ٱللَّهُ ۗ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن كَتَمَ شَهَٰدَةً عِندَهُۥ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَٰفِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٠﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٤٠)

2:140. Or would you say that Ibrâheem, Ismâ'eel, Is-ḥâq, Ya'qoob and the Tribes were Jews or Christians? Say: Do you know better, or does Allah? And who does greater wrong than those who conceal a testimony they have received from Allah? But Allah is not unaware of what you do.

This refers to another claim on their part and another argument about the Messengers of Allah. They claimed that they were closer to the Messengers than the Muslims were.

But Allah refuted that by saying ﴿Do you know better, or does Allah?﴾ Elsewhere, Allah says:

﴿Ibrâheem was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a monotheist, a Muslim, and he was not one of those who ascribe partners to Allah.﴾ *(Âl 'Imrân 3: 67)*

But they said that he was a Jew or a Christian.

Either they are the ones who are telling the truth and have knowledge of that, or Allah (ﷻ) is the One Who is telling the truth and has knowledge of that. One of the two must inevitably be true; the answer is not stated explicitly but it is absolutely clear and so obvious that there is no need to say that it is Allah Who knows best and is most truthful, and the like. The answer is obvious to everyone; this is like saying: is the night more illuminating, or the day? Is the fire hotter, or water? Is polytheism better, or monotheism (tawḥeed)? And so on.

Anyone with the slightest common sense will know this; indeed even the Jews and Christians themselves know it. They know that

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Ibrâheem and other Prophets were neither Jews nor Christians, but they concealed this knowledge and testimony, hence their wrongdoing is the worst. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And who does greater wrong than those who conceal a testimony they have received from Allah?﴾ This is testimony that they have; it was entrusted to them by Allah and not by any created being, so they should have paid attention to it by declaring it, but they concealed it and showed the opposite. Thus they combined the sin of concealing the truth and not speaking it with the propagation of falsehood. Is this not the greatest wrongdoing? Indeed it is, and they will receive the harshest punishment. Hence Allah says: ﴿But Allah is not unaware of what you do﴾. Rather He has recorded and listed their deeds and has stored up the punishment for them. What a bad punishment theirs will be, and what a bad final abode the fire will be. This is the Qur'anic style, to mention the knowledge and power of Allah after verses that refer to the deeds that He will punish.

Then Allah (ﷻ) says:




﴿تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُم مَّا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْـَٔلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤١﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٤١)

2:141. That is a nation which has [already] passed away; they will have what they earned and you will have what you earn, and you will not be questioned about what they used to do.

The meaning of this verse has been discussed above. It is repeated in order to put an end to anyone pinning his hopes on any created being; what matters is the attributes that a person acquires, not the deeds of his forefathers. What really benefits the individual is his deeds and not his lineage.

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﴿ سَيَقُولُ ٱلسُّفَهَآءُ مِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَا وَلَّىٰهُمْ عَن قِبْلَتِهِمُ ٱلَّتِى كَانُوا۟ عَلَيْهَا ۚ قُل لِّلَّهِ ٱلْمَشْرِقُ وَٱلْمَغْرِبُ ۚ يَهْدِى مَن يَشَآءُ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٤٢﴾ وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَٰكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِّتَكُونُوا۟ شُهَدَآءَ عَلَى ٱلنَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ ٱلرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا ٱلْقِبْلَةَ ٱلَّتِى كُنتَ عَلَيْهَآ إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَن يَتَّبِعُ ٱلرَّسُولَ مِمَّن يَنقَلِبُ عَلَىٰ عَقِبَيْهِ ۚ وَإِن كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ هَدَى ٱللَّهُ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ ٱللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَٰنَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِٱلنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٤٢-١٤٣)

2:142. The fools among the people will say: What has turned them from the qibla [direction of prayer] towards which they used to face? Say: To Allah belong the east and the west: He guides whom He will to a path that is straight.

2:143. Thus We have made of you an Ummah justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over humankind, and the Messenger might be a witness over you; and We prescribed the qibla towards which you used to face, only in order to know those who would follow the Messenger from those who would turn on their heels. It was indeed difficult, except for those whom Allah guided. Allah will never let your faith go to waste, for Allah is to all people Most Compassionate, Most Merciful.

The first verse is miraculous and offers consolation and reassurance to the believers. It discusses an objection and the answer to it in three ways; it gives a description of the ones who raised this objection and a description of the one who submits to the ruling and religion of Allah.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that the fools among the people are going to raise this objection. They are the ones who do not know what is good for themselves; rather they cause loss for themselves and sell their souls for the cheapest price. They are the Jews and Christians, and others like them, who object to the rulings and laws of Allah. The

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background here is that the Muslims were enjoined to face towards Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem) for the duration of their time in Makkah, then approximately one and a half years after the migration (Hijrah) to Madinah, by His wisdom, Allah commanded them to face towards the Kaaba. Then He told them that the fools among the people would inevitably say: ﴿What has turned them from the qibla [direction of prayer] towards which they used to face?﴾ For they used to face towards Jerusalem, so what has made them turn away from it? This is an objection to Allah's ruling, law, grace and kindness. So Allah consoled the believers by telling them what was going to happen and pointing out that it would only come from those who were foolish, lacking in reason, forbearance and religious commitment, so do not pay any attention to them, because you know where this talk is coming from. The wise person pays no attention to the objections of the fool, and does not worry about him. This verse indicates that no one objects to the rulings of Allah but one who is foolish, ignorant and stubborn. As for the wise and rational believer, he accepts the rulings of his Lord and submits to them, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿It is not fitting for any believing man or believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided concerning a matter, to have any choice in that matter...﴾ *(al-Aḥzāb 33: 36)*

﴿But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you [O Muhammad] judge in all disputes between them, then find in their hearts no reservations about your verdicts, but accept them wholeheartedly.﴾ *(an-Nisā' 4: 65)*

﴿The only response of the believers, when they are called to Allah and His Messenger so that he may judge between them, is to say: We hear and we obey...﴾ *(an-Noor 24: 51)*

The fact that Allah describes them as ﴿The fools﴾ is sufficient to reject what they say, with no need for further refutation.

But Allah (ﷻ) did not leave this specious argument without dispelling it and highlighting the flaws in the argument that may influence some people. So He said: ﴿Say﴾ in response to them:

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﴿To Allah belong the east and the west: He guides whom He will to a path that is straight﴾ that is, as the east and the west both belong to Allah, there is no direction that is beyond His dominion. Moreover, He guides whom He will to a path that is straight, and part of that is His guiding you to this qibla, which was the way of your father Ibrâheem. So why are these people objecting to your turning towards a qibla or direction that is under Allah's dominion, for you are not facing towards any direction that does not belong to Him? Therefore one must submit to His command, if only for no other reason than this. So how about if, by His grace and kindness, Allah has guided you to that? Then the one who is objecting to you is in fact objecting to the grace of Allah, out of envy and resentment towards you.

Because Allah says: ﴿He guides whom He will to a path that is straight﴾, and what is stated in general terms is to be understood in the light of another verse that is more specific, there are reasons for guidance and misguidance, in accordance with the wisdom and justice of Allah. He has stated in more than one place in His Book the causes of guidance by which, if a person does them, he will be guided. For example, Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...There has come to you from Allah a light and a clear Book, with which Allah guides all who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and safety...﴾ *(al-Mâ'idah 5: 15-16)*

In this verse, Allah mentions the means of guidance for this Ummah in general terms and how Allah blesses this Ummah, then He says: ﴿Thus We have made of you an Ummah justly balanced﴾ that is, following a moderate and just way. Anything other than the moderate middle way comes under the heading of extremes that are subject to prohibition. So Allah has made this Ummah justly balanced in all matters of religion and justly balanced with regard to belief in the Prophets, so that they do not go to extremes in veneration, as the Christians did, or in disrespect, as the Jews did. The Muslims believe in all the Prophets in an appropriate manner. They also follow

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a moderate middle way with regard to laws, avoiding the strictness and restrictions of the Jews and the lenience of the Christians.

With regard to matters of purification and food, the Muslims are not like the Jews, whose prayers cannot be valid unless they are offered in their synagogues, and whom not even water can purify from impurities. Good things were forbidden to them, as a punishment. And they are not like the Christians, who do not regard anything as impure or forbid anything; rather they permitted (as food) anything that walks or crawls on the face of the earth.

The Muslims' way of purification is the most perfect and complete; Allah has permitted to them good things in the area of food, drinks, clothing and marriage, and He has forbidden to them whatever is impure in those areas. Hence this Ummah has the most perfect religion, the best manners, and the most virtuous deeds.

Allah has bestowed upon them knowledge, forbearance, justice and kindness that He did not bestow upon any other nation. Hence they are ﴿an Ummah justly balanced﴾, that is a perfect community to be ﴿witnesses over humankind﴾. Because of their justice and fair ruling, they pass judgement between people of other religions, but no one else passes judgement on them. Whatever the Ummah testifies is acceptable should be accepted; whatever they testify is unacceptable should be rejected. If it is asked: how can they pass judgement on others when the testimony of each disputant is unacceptable to the other? The response is that rather the view of one of the disputants will not be acceptable, because there is the suspicion of bias, but when this suspicion is not present and there is complete justice, as is the case with this Ummah, then it is acceptable, because what matters is passing judgement on the basis of justice and truth, the condition of which is knowledge and justice, which are both present in this Ummah. Therefore its judgement is to be accepted.

If anyone has any doubts about the virtue of this Ummah, and wants someone to testify in its favour, the one to do that is the most

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perfect of Allah's creation, their Prophet (ﷺ), hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿and the Messenger might be a witness over you﴾.

One aspect of the testimony of this Ummah over others is that on the Day of Resurrection, when Allah asks the Messengers whether they conveyed the message, and He asks the nations who rejected them whether they received the message or not, and they deny that the Prophets conveyed the message to them, the Prophets will ask this Ummah for testimony, and its Prophet will speak in its favour (so that its testimony might be accepted).

This verse also indicates that the consensus of this Ummah constitutes definitive proof, and that they are protected from error, because Allah describes them as ﴿justly balanced﴾. If we were to assume that they agreed upon error, they could not have been described as justly balanced, except in a few issues. Because Allah says ﴿that you might be witnesses over humankind﴾, this implies that if they testify on a particular matter that Allah has permitted it, forbidden it or made it obligatory, then they cannot be wrong. We also learn from this verse that issuing verdicts, testifying, giving fatwas and so on are things that can only be accepted from people of good character, those who are ﴿justly balanced﴾.

﴿and We prescribed the qibla towards which you used to face﴾, which was initially the direction of Jerusalem
﴿only in order to know﴾ – this refers to knowledge that forms the basis of reward and punishment; otherwise Allah (ﷻ) has knowledge of everything before it happens, but this prior knowledge does not form the basis of reward and punishment, because of His complete justice and so as to establish proof against His slaves; rather when their deeds occur, reward and punishment become due. In other words: We prescribed this qibla in order to know and test ﴿those who would follow the Messenger﴾ and believe in him, and follow him in all situations, because he is a slave under orders, and because the previous Books stated that he would face towards the Kaaba. The fair-minded

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one is the one who seeks the truth that will increase him in faith and obedience to the Messenger (ﷺ).

As for the one who turns on his heels and turns away from the truth, following his whims and desires, it only increases him in disbelief and confusion, and he gives a false argument that is based on doubts to which there is no reality.

﴿It﴾ that is, the changing of the qibla ﴿was indeed difficult﴾ that is, hard ﴿except for those whom Allah guided﴾; they realised that this was a blessing from Allah to them, so they gave thanks and acknowledged His favour to them, as He commanded them to face towards this sacred House, which He favoured over all other places on earth, and made pilgrimage to it one of the pillars of Islam and the means of erasing sin. Hence it was easy for them but difficult for others.

Then Allah says: ﴿Allah will never let your faith go to waste﴾ that is, it is not appropriate or befitting for Him to do such a thing; rather it is not possible. Allah tells us that it is impossible for Him to let your faith go to waste. This is great glad tidings for those whom He has blessed with Islam and faith, for He will preserve and keep their faith for them, and will not let it go to waste. This keeping is of two types: protecting it from going to waste or becoming invalid, by protecting it for them from any trials and tribulations, or whims and desires, that could spoil it or undermine it; and protecting it by making it grow for them and guiding them to that by means of which their faith will increase and their certainty will become complete. Just as He initially guided you to faith, He will preserve it for you and will complete His favour to you by making it, and its reward, grow and increase, and by protecting it from anything that could contaminate it. When turmoils strike, which are a test aimed at finding out who is sincere in his faith and who is lying, these trials will purify the believers and highlight their sincerity. It is as if this is aimed at refuting the argument of those who said when Allah said: ﴿and We prescribed

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the qibla towards which you used to face, only in order to know those who would follow the Messenger from those who would turn on their heels﴾, that this could be a cause of some believers leaving the faith, so He refuted this misguided notion by saying: ﴿Allah will never let your faith go to waste﴾ by decreeing this test or others. That also includes those of the believers who died before the qibla was changed; Allah will not let their faith go to waste, because they obeyed the command of Allah and obeyed His Messenger (ﷺ) at that time. Obedience to Allah means following His command at all times, in the manner appropriate at a particular time. This verse is proof for the view of ahl as-Sunnah wal-jamâ'ah that faith includes physical deeds.

﴿for Allah is to all people Most Compassionate, Most Merciful﴾ that is, He is very merciful towards them. Because of His compassion and mercy towards them, He completes His blessing that He bestowed on them in the first place, makes them distinct from those who paid lip service to faith only, without really believing in their hearts, tests them in such a way that He increases their faith and raises their status thereby, and instructs them to face towards the direction of the noblest and greatest House.

﴿ قَدْ نَرَىٰ تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي ٱلسَّمَآءِ ۖ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَىٰهَا ۚ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ ۚ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنتُمْ فَوَلُّوا۟ وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُۥ ۗ وَإِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ ٱلْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ ۗ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَٰفِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٤٤)

2:144. We see the turning of your face [for guidance] towards heaven; now We will turn you to a qibla that will please you. So turn your face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque; wherever you

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are, turn your faces in its direction. Those who were given the scripture know well that that is the truth from their Lord, and Allah is not unaware of what they do.

Allah says to His Prophet (ﷺ): ﴿We see the turning of your face [for guidance] towards heaven﴾ that is, We see you frequently turning your face in all directions, longing and waiting for revelation with instructions to turn towards the Kaaba. It mentions ﴿your face﴾ and not "your gaze", to convey a sense of great eagerness and because turning of the face implies turning of the gaze.

﴿now We will turn you﴾ that is, We will direct you, as you are under Our protection
﴿to a qibla that will please you﴾ that is, that you will love, namely the Kaaba. This is indicative of the virtue and high status of the Prophet (ﷺ), as Allah (ﷻ) hastened to please him. Then He told him in clear terms to face towards it: ﴿So turn your face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque﴾. The word translated here as ﴿face﴾ refers to the front of the body
﴿wherever you are﴾ on land or sea, east or west, north or south
﴿turn your faces in its direction﴾ that is, towards it.

This highlights the fact that facing the Kaaba is a condition of validity for all prayers, obligatory and supererogatory, and that if it is possible to face it directly, then one must do so, otherwise facing its general direction is sufficient; turning away from it (whilst praying) invalidates the prayer, because the command to do a thing is a prohibition of its opposite. As Allah mentioned above the People of the Book and others objecting to that, and referred to their argument, here He states that the people of knowledge among them know that you are following the truth and the command of your Lord in that regard, because they find this in their scripture. Therefore their objection stems from stubbornness and wrongdoing, because they know that they are in the wrong. So do not concern yourself with that, for a

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person would only worry about someone objecting to him if the matter in question was ambiguous or unclear, and it is possible that the objection may be valid (which is not applicable in this case, however).

But when one is certain that the one who is being subjected to objections is in the right, and the motive of the one who raised the objection is stubbornness, and he is aware that he is in the wrong, then there is no reason to be concerned; rather you may expect punishment to befall the one who is objecting, in this world and in the hereafter. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿and Allah is not unaware of what they do﴾; rather He is recording their deeds and will requite them for them. This is a warning to those who object, and it offers consolation to the believers.




﴿وَلَئِنْ أَتَيْتَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَا تَبِعُوا قِبْلَتَكَ ۚ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتَهُمْ ۚ وَمَا بَعْضُهُمْ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ ۚ وَلَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ ۙ إِنَّكَ إِذًا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٤٥)

2:145. Even if you were to bring to those who were given the scripture every kind of sign, they would not follow your qibla, nor would you follow their qibla; nor indeed would they follow one another's qibla. If you were to follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, then you would surely be in the wrong.

Because the Prophet (ﷺ) was so eager for people to be guided, he would do his utmost to offer sincere advice, speaking to them in a gentle manner to show them the path of guidance, and he would be distressed if they did not follow the command of Allah. Among the disbelievers were some who rebelled against the command of Allah and opposed the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and they rejected

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guidance deliberately, out of stubbornness. Such people included the Jews and Christians, the people of the first Book, who disbelieved in Muhammad (ﷺ) despite having certain knowledge (that he was a true Prophet); their disbelief did not stem from ignorance. Hence Allah (ﷻ) told him: ﴿Even if you were to bring to those who were given the scripture every kind of sign﴾ that is, every kind of proof and evidence to support what you say and explain what you are calling them to ﴿they would not follow your qibla﴾ that is, they would not follow you, because following his qibla is indicative of following him. This is mentioned because the reason for the argument was the issue of the qibla. They adopted this stance because they were stubborn; they knew the truth but they turned away from it. Signs are only of benefit to one who is seeking the truth but is somewhat confused, in which case clear signs may explain the matter to him. As for the one who has decided not to follow the truth, there is no hope for him.

Moreover, there were already some differences among them, as some of them did not follow the qibla of others. So there is nothing strange in them not following your qibla, O Muhammad (ﷺ), when they are enemies filled with real envy.

﴿nor would you follow their qibla﴾. This is more eloquent than saying "do not follow their qibla", because that implies that it is natural for the Prophet (ﷺ) to be different from them, hence it is impossible for him to do that.

Similarly, as the truth had become clear on the basis of certain evidence, there was no need to bring an answer to their specious argument, because there is no end to such arguments and because it is easy to see that they are flawed, as it is known that everything that is contrary to clear truth is false. Therefore discussion of their specious arguments is not necessary.

﴿If you were to follow their desires﴾ – the verse mentions ﴿their desires﴾ and not "their religion" because what they are following is

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mere whims and desires, even though deep in their hearts they know that it is not a religion. The one who forsakes religion will inevitably follow whims and desires. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Have you seen the one who takes his own whims and desires as his god?...﴾ *(al-Furqān 25: 43)*

﴿after the knowledge that has come to you﴾ that what you are following is truth and what they are following is falsehood ﴿then you would﴾ if you did follow them ﴿surely be in the wrong﴾; you would be one of the wrongdoers, and what wrongdoing can be greater than the wrongdoing of one who knows what is true and false, but gives precedence to falsehood over truth? Although this is addressed to the Prophet (ﷺ), it also includes his Ummah. Moreover, if this is the case with regard to the Prophet (ﷺ), were he to do that – and he is far above becoming a wrongdoer as he is so elevated in status and did so many good deeds – then anyone else would be more deserving of being called a wrongdoer.




﴿ٱلَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَٰهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ يَعْرِفُونَهُۥ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَآءَهُمْ ۖ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِّنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ ٱلْحَقَّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ ٱلْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ ۖ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ ٱلْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٤٦-١٤٧)

2:146. Those to whom We gave the scripture know him [the Prophet] as they know their own sons; but some of them conceal the truth knowingly.

2:147. It is truth from your Lord; so do not be among those who doubt.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that it was well established among the People of the Book, and they knew, that Muhammad (ﷺ) was the Messenger of Allah and that what he brought was truth; they were

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as certain of that as they were certain of their own sons, who they would not confuse with anyone else. Their knowledge of Muhammad (ﷺ) was of such a level that there could be no doubt or confusion about it at all.

But some of them – in fact the majority of them – who disbelieved in him concealed this testimony knowingly, despite that certainty. ﴿And who does greater wrong than those who conceal a testimony they have received from Allah?﴾ *(2: 140)*. This provided consolation to the Messenger (ﷺ) and the believers, and warned them about the evil and specious arguments of these people. But some of them did not knowingly conceal the truth, some of them believed in him, and some disbelieved in him out of ignorance.

The one who has knowledge is obliged to disclose the truth, explain it and make it attractive to people with whatever means he can of eloquence, proof, examples and so on. He must also show falsehood to be false, distinguish it from the truth, and make it look displeasing and unattractive, with whatever means he can. Those who conceal the truth did the opposite of what they were commanded to do, which had a negative impact on their character and attitude.

﴿It is truth from your Lord﴾ that is, this is the truth which is more deserving of being called truth than anything else, because of what it contains of sublime aims, good instructions, purification of the soul, and motivation to focus on what is in its best interests and ward off that which may harm it, because it comes from your Lord. He has sent down to you the Qur'an in which there is nourishment for minds and souls, and guidance to that which is in their best interests.

﴿so do not be among those who doubt﴾ that is, you should not have the slightest doubt about it, rather you should think about it and ponder its meanings until you reach certainty thereby, because pondering it will inevitably ward off doubt and bring certainty.

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﴿وَلِكُلٍّ وِجْهَةٌ هُوَ مُوَلِّيهَا فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٤٨﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٤٨)

2:148. Each community has its own direction to which it turns, so hasten to do good deeds. Wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together, for Allah has power over all things.

That is, the people of each religion have a direction towards which they face in worship. It is not the issue of facing towards a particular direction, because that is one of the laws that may change with time and circumstance, and it is subject to abrogation or to change from one direction to another. Rather what matters is obeying Allah and seeking to draw closer to Him. This is a sign of blessing and piety; if one does not acquire it, he will be a loser in this world and in the hereafter, but if he acquires it, he will be a winner in the true sense of the word. This is something that is agreed upon in all religions, and it is the purpose for which Allah created the universe and enjoined it upon them.

The command to hasten to do good deeds implies more than a command to do good deeds, for hastening to do good deeds implies doing them in the best possible manner, and racing to do that. The one who takes this initiative in this world will be the first to attain paradise in the hereafter, and those who are foremost in the race will be the highest in status.

Good deeds include all obligatory duties, such as prayer, fasting, zakâh, Hajj, *'umrah*, jihad and helping others and yourself.

As one of the greatest motivations for hastening to do good deeds is the reward that Allah has connected to such deeds, He says: ﴿Wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together, for Allah has power over all things﴾. He will bring you all together on the Day

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of Resurrection, by His might and power, then he will requite each individual for what he did:

﴿...so He will requite those who do evil for their deeds, and He will reward those who do good with the best reward.﴾ *(an-Najm 53: 31)*

This verse is quoted as evidence for doing all kinds of good deeds, such as offering prayer when the time for it begins; hastening to do what is required of fasting, Hajj, 'umrah and praying zakâh; offering sunnah acts of worship and so on. How comprehensive and beneficial this verse is!



﴿وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۖ وَإِنَّهُ لَلْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ ۗ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۖ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي وَلِأُتِمَّ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾﴾

(سورة البقرة: ١٤٩-١٥٠)

2:149. Thus wherever you set out from, turn your face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque [when you pray]; that is indeed the truth from your Lord. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.

2:150. And wherever you set out from, turn your face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque [when you pray], and wherever you are, turn your faces towards it, so that the people will not have any argument against you, except for the wrongdoers among them. So fear them not, but fear Me. And [it is] so that I may complete My blessing upon you and that you may be guided.

﴿And wherever you set out from﴾ that is, when travelling and so on; this is general in meaning

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﴿turn your face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque﴾ that is, towards it.

Then Allah addresses the Ummah in general: ﴿and wherever you are, turn your faces towards it﴾.

﴿that is indeed the truth from your Lord﴾. Here Allah confirms it so that no one will have any cause for confusion and so that no one will think that this is based on whims and desires rather than obedience to Allah.

﴿And Allah is not unaware of what you do﴾; rather He sees you in all that you do, so respect Him and remember that He is always watching by obeying His commands and heeding His prohibitions. For your deeds do not go unnoticed; rather you will be requited for them in full; if they are good then you will be rewarded and if they are bad then you will be punished.

﴿so that the people will not have any argument against you﴾ that is, We have prescribed for you to face towards the Kaaba so that there will be no argument against you from the People of the Book or the polytheists. If you were to continue to face towards Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem), then there would be an argument against him (the Prophet [ﷺ]). The People of the Book find written in their scripture that their ultimate qibla is the Kaaba, the Sacred House, and the polytheists think that this great House is a source of pride for them and that it is part of the religion of Ibrâheem, so if Muhammad (ﷺ) did not face towards it in prayer, then they would have an argument against him and would say: How can he claim to be following the religion of Ibrâheem from whom he is descended, when he has forsaken his qibla? Thus by facing towards the Kaaba, proof was established against the People of the Book and the polytheists, so that they would have no argument against him, except those of them who did wrong; in other words those who argued against him are wrong in their argument, and there is no basis for this argument except following whims and desires and wrongdoing. Such a person will not be convinced by

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arguing with him. Likewise, there is no point in paying attention to any of the specious arguments that they present to support their view. Hence Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿So fear them not﴾, because their argument is invalid, and what is invalid is always defeated, as is its proponent. This is unlike the proponent of the truth, for truth always gains the upper hand and prevails; it is the one who has truth on his side who ought to be feared. Allah decreed that He should be feared, and this fear is the foundation of all good. The one who does not fear Allah will not refrain from disobeying Him, and he will not obey His commands.

The Muslims' turning to face towards the Kaaba is a matter that resulted in a great deal of confusion, that was promoted by the People of the Book, the hypocrites and the polytheists. They spoke a great deal about it and presented specious arguments. Hence Allah (ﷻ) explained the matter fully, clarified it and reiterated it in various ways, including this verse.

- He enjoined it three times, although saying it once would have been sufficient.
- Commands were usually either addressed to the Messenger (ﷺ), and the Ummah was included in that, by implication, or they were addressed to the Ummah in general. But in this verse, the command is addressed to the Messenger (ﷺ) in particular: ﴿turn your face﴾, and then to the Ummah in general: ﴿turn your faces﴾.
- Allah refuted all the false arguments that were presented by the stubborn people, addressing them one by one, as explained above.
- He put an end to hope on the part of the People of the Book that the Messenger (ﷺ) would follow the qibla of the People of the Book.
- Allah says: ﴿that is indeed the truth from your Lord﴾. The mere fact that this is a statement from Almighty Allah is sufficient,

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yet He emphasised it (by saying *wa innahu*, translated here as ﴿that is indeed﴾).

As He is the knower of what is hidden, he tells us that the validity of this matter was well-established for People of the Book, but they concealed this testimony knowingly.

As Allah's instructions to face towards the qibla is a great blessing, and His kindness and mercy to this Ummah are persistent, and every time He prescribed something new for them, it was a great blessing, He said: ﴿And [it is] so that I may complete My blessing upon you﴾. The foundation of this blessing is guidance to His religion, by sending His Messenger (ﷺ) and revealing His Book to him, then other blessings came after that to complete the initial blessing. The blessings that were bestowed from the beginning of the Prophet's mission until his time to depart from this world drew close cannot be enumerated, for Allah bestowed upon him blessings and bounty, and He bestowed upon his Ummah that which completed the blessings that He had bestowed upon him and then, and Allah revealed to him the words:

﴿...This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My blessing upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion...﴾ *(al-Mâ'idah 5: 3)*

Praise be to Allah for His bounty, which cannot be enumerated or quantified, let alone giving sufficient thanks for it.

﴿and that you may be guided﴾ that is, that you may learn the truth and act upon it. By His mercy towards His slaves, Allah (ﷻ) has made the means of guidance very easy for them and has described it very clearly to them; as part of that, He uses the stubborn people who argue against the truth, and thus the truth becomes more manifest and its signs become clearer, and the invalidity of falsehood and the lack of any foundation become apparent. Were it not for falsehood opposing truth, truth would not be clear to most people. Things become clearer when contrasted with their opposites. Were it not for the night, the

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virtue of the day would not be known; were it not for ugliness, the virtue of beauty would not be known; were it not for darkness, the benefit of light would not be known. Were it not for falsehood, truth would not become so clear. Praise be to Allah for that.




﴿كَمَآ أَرۡسَلۡنَا فِيكُمۡ رَسُولٗا مِّنكُمۡ يَتۡلُواْ عَلَيۡكُمۡ ءَايَٰتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمۡ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ وَٱلۡحِكۡمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمۡ تَكُونُواْ تَعۡلَمُونَ ١٥١ فَٱذۡكُرُونِيٓ أَذۡكُرۡكُمۡ وَٱشۡكُرُواْ لِي وَلَا تَكۡفُرُونِ ١٥٢﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٥١-١٥٢)

2:151. Similarly We sent to you a Messenger from among you, reciting to you Our revelations, purifying you, and teaching you the Book and wisdom, and teaching you that which you did not know.

2:152. Therefore remember Me; I will remember you. Give thanks to Me, and do not be ungrateful.

Here Allah tells us: the blessings that We bestowed upon you by instructing you to face towards the Kaaba and completing the blessing with other laws and further blessings are not something new; rather We bestowed upon you many blessings, great and small, the most significant of which is sending to you this great Messenger (ﷺ) from among you; you know his lineage, truthfulness, honesty, perfect character and sincerity.

﴿reciting to you Our revelations﴾. This refers to the Qur'anic verses; he recites to you verses that distinguish truth from falsehood, guidance from misguidance. First of all they tell you of the oneness and perfection of Allah, then the truthfulness of His Messenger (ﷺ) and the obligation to believe in him, then they tell you about the resurrection and other matters of the unseen, so that you will attain complete guidance and certain knowledge.

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﴿purifying you﴾ that is, he teaches you good manners and purifies your souls, teaching you how to achieve good characteristics and keep away from bad characteristics, such as purifying you by leading you from polytheism to monotheism, from showing off to sincerity, from lying to honesty, from treachery to trustworthiness, from arrogance to humility, from bad attitudes to good attitudes, from mutual hatred and shunning to mutual love and strong ties, and other kinds of purification.

﴿teaching you the Book﴾ that is, the Qur'an
﴿and wisdom﴾. It was suggested that this refers to the Sunnah or to deep knowledge and understanding of Sharia and *fiqh*, and the ability to evaluate things properly. On that basis, we may understand that teaching of the Sunnah is included in teaching of the Book, because the Sunnah explains the Qur'an and offers commentary and interpretation of it.
﴿and teaching you that which you did not know﴾. Before the Prophet (ﷺ) was sent to them, they were in a state of obvious misguidance, with no knowledge or achievements. All the knowledge and achievements attained by this Ummah came at the hands of the Prophet (ﷺ) and because of him. This blessing is the foundation of all other blessings, and it is the greatest blessing that Allah bestowed upon His slaves. What is required of them is to give thanks to Allah for it and to adhere to the Prophet's teachings.

Hence Allah says: ﴿Therefore remember Me; I will remember you﴾. Here Allah commands us to remember Him, and He promises the best of rewards for that, which is that He remembers those who remember Him. The Messenger (ﷺ) has told us in a *hadith qudsi* that Allah (ﷻ) says:
«Whoever remembers Me to himself, I will remember him to Myself; whoever remembers Me in a gathering, I will remember him in a gathering better than it.» (A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

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Allah tells us that the best of *dhikr* (remembrance of Him) is that which occurs simultaneously in the heart and on the lips. This is the dhikr that leads to increased knowledge of Allah and love for Him, and brings a greater reward. Dhikr is the essence of gratitude, hence He enjoins it in particular, then follows that with the command to show gratitude in general, as He says: ﴿Give thanks to Me﴾ that is, for these blessings that I have bestowed upon you, and because I have warded off from you all sorts of harm. Gratitude may be in the heart, which means affirming and acknowledging the blessings; it may be on the lips, in the form of dhikr and words of praise; or it may take the form of physical actions such as obeying Allah, submitting to His commands and avoiding that which He has forbidden. By means of gratitude, the existing blessings will continue, and further blessings will be added to them. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...If you give thanks, I will surely give you more...﴾ *(Ibrâheem 14: 7)*

In these two verses, Allah instructs us to give thanks after receiving the spiritual blessings of knowledge, purification and learning good manners, as well as being helped to do good deeds, and He tells us that this is the greatest of blessings; in fact it is the real blessing that will last after other blessings vanish. The one who is guided and enabled to acquire knowledge or do good deeds should give thanks to Allah for that, so that He may increase His blessings to them and so as to ward off self-admiration. So they should busy themselves with giving thanks.

Because the opposite of gratitude is ingratitude, Allah forbids its opposite and says: ﴿and do not be ungrateful﴾. What is meant by ingratitude here is the opposite of gratitude; it is ingratitude for and denial of blessings, and the failure to appreciate them and fulfil one's duties with regard to them. It may be understood as being general in meaning, hence ingratitude is of many types, the most serious of which

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is disbelief in Allah, then sins of different types, such as associating others with Allah and sins that are less serious than that.

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱسْتَعِينُواْ بِٱلصَّبْرِ وَٱلصَّلَوٰةِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ مَعَ ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٥٣)

2:153. O you who believe, seek help through patience and prayer; for Allah is with those who are patient.

Here Allah (ﷻ) commands the believers to seek help in their religious and worldly affairs ﴿through patience and prayer﴾. Patience means controlling oneself in the face of that which one dislikes. That is of three types: patience in obedience to Allah, so that you will do it; patience in refraining from disobedience to Allah, so that you will not do it; and patience in accepting the decree of Allah when it is hard, so that you will not resent it. Patience is a great help in all matters, and there is no way for one who is not patient to achieve his goals, especially with regard to acts of worship that are difficult and are to be done regularly, because they require a great deal of patience to bear the hardship involved. If the one who does these acts of worship adheres to patience, he will attain success, but if he is deterred by difficulty and hardship, and does not have the patience to persist in these acts of worship, he will not achieve anything, and he will be deprived. Similarly, the sin for which one has a strong inclination and which is within one's means is something that cannot be resisted except by means of great patience, resisting one's inclination for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) and by seeking Allah's help to protect one from it, for it is one of the greatest temptations and is also a very difficult test, especially if it is ongoing. In such cases willpower and physical strength grow weak, and it may lead to resentment, unless one resists

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it by means of patience for the sake of Allah and puts one's trust in Him, turning to Him and expressing one's constant need for His help.

Therefore we know that patience is something that people need; in fact they are in desperate need of it in all situations. Hence Allah has enjoined it and tells us that He is ﴿with those who are patient﴾ that is, He is with those for whom patience is second nature. He is with them in the sense of helping and guiding them, thus hardships and difficulties become easy for them, they become able to cope with any serious matter and nothing is difficult for them. This kind of 'being with' is indicative of Allah's love, help, support and closeness, and it is a great privilege that is bestowed upon those who are patient. If those who are patient did not have any virtue other than the fact that Allah is with them, that would be sufficient honour for them. As for 'being with' in a general sense, it means that Allah is with us by His knowledge and power, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...He is with you wherever you may be...﴾ *(al-Ḥadeed 57: 4)*

This is general in meaning and applies to everyone.

Allah enjoins seeking help through prayer because prayer is the foundation of the faith and the light of the believers; it is the connection between the slave and his Lord. If a person's prayer is complete, including every obligatory and sunnah action, and it is done with the presence of mind that is its essence, when the individual begins to pray, feeling that he is indeed standing before his Lord, standing like a well-disciplined slave, focusing on everything that he says and does, fully immersed in conversing with his Lord and calling upon Him, then this prayer is most certainly one of the greatest helps in all one's affairs. Prayer restrains one from shameful and evil acts, because this focus in prayer will lead him to comply with the commands of his Lord and heed His prohibitions. This is the prayer through which Allah has enjoined us to seek help in all our affairs.

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﴿وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَن يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ ۚ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَٰكِن لَّا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾﴾

(سورة البقرة: ١٥٤)

2:154. Do not say of those who are slain in the way of Allah: They are dead. Nay, they are alive, although you do not perceive [it].

When Allah issued the command to seek help through patience in all affairs, He gave an example of a matter in which one may seek help through patience, namely jihad for His sake. It is the best of physical acts of obedience and the most difficult for people, because in and of itself it is tough and because it may lead to death and loss of life, for people usually are attached to this world, so they want to live and attain the means of survival. So all their activities are for the purpose of survival and are aimed at warding off what is contrary to it.

It is well known that the wise individual does not give up what he loves unless it is for something even better. Hence Allah tells us that the one who is killed for His sake, when fighting so that the word of Allah may be supreme and His religion may prevail, and not for any other purpose, is not missing out on the life that he loves; rather he has attained a life that is more perfect than what you may think or imagine.

The martyrs:

﴿...are alive with their Lord, receiving provision, rejoicing in what Allah has bestowed upon them out of His bounty, sharing glad tidings that for those who have yet to join them, of those whom they left behind, they will have no fear, nor will they grieve. Rejoicing in the favours and bounties of Allah, and at the awareness that Allah will not cause the reward of the believers to be lost.﴾ *(Âl 'Imrân 3: 169-171)*

Is there anything greater than this life (of the martyrs) that includes closeness to Allah (ﷻ), physical enjoyment in the form of delicious food and drink, and spiritual enjoyment, which is joy, jubilation and

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the end of fear and grief? This is a life in *al-barzakh* (the period between death and the resurrection) that is more perfect than the life of this world. In fact the Prophet (ﷺ) told us that the souls of the martyrs are in the crops of green birds that drink from the rivers of paradise and eat from its fruits, then they go back to the lamps that are suspended from the Throne. In this verse there is the greatest encouragement of jihad for the sake of Allah, and being steadfast and patient in jihad. If people were aware of the reward of those who are killed for the sake of Allah, no one would stay behind. But the lack of certainty is what makes their resolve fail, makes them sleep more and causes them to miss out on immense rewards. How could it be otherwise, when Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their wealth, in return for which paradise will be theirs; they fight in His cause, and they slay and are slain...﴾ *(at-Tawbah 9: 111)*

If a man had one thousand souls and lost them one by one for the sake of Allah, that would be insignificant in comparison to this great reward. Hence after seeing with their own eyes the reward of Allah, the martyrs would only wish to return to this world so that they might be killed again and again for His sake.

This verse indicates that there is bliss and torment in al-barzakh, as is confirmed in so many texts.




﴿ وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُم بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ ٱلْخَوْفِ وَٱلْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ ٱلْأَمْوَٰلِ وَٱلْأَنفُسِ وَٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ إِذَآ أَصَٰبَتْهُم مُّصِيبَةٌ قَالُوٓا۟ إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّآ إِلَيْهِ رَٰجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَٰتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۖ وَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٥٥-١٥٧)

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2:155. We will certainly test you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of property, lives and crops, but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere,

2:156. Who say, when afflicted with calamity: To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return.

2:157. They are the ones on whom blessings and mercy from their Lord are [bestowed], and they are the ones who are guided.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He will inevitably test His slaves with all sorts of trials and tribulations, in order to distinguish the sincere from the liars, and the impatient from the patient. This is His way with His slaves, because if times of ease were to persist for people of faith, without any trials, it would not be clear who is who, and that would lead to mischief. The wisdom of Allah dictates that good people should be distinguished from bad people. The purpose of tests is not to cause the believers to lose their faith or turn away from the religion, for Allah will not let the faith of the believers go to waste. But in this verse He tells us that He will test His slaves ﴿with something of fear﴾ of their enemies ﴿and hunger﴾. That is, He will test them with a little of these things, because if He tested them with extensive fear or hunger, they would be destroyed, but the purpose of tests is to purify, not to destroy.

﴿and loss of property﴾ – this includes everything that may befall wealth and property, such as vermin, drowning and other types of loss, or the seizing of wealth by evildoers, such as unjust rulers, bandits and the like.

﴿lives﴾ that is, loss of loved ones such as children, relatives and friends. It also includes various kinds of diseases that may affect the individual or one of his loved ones.

﴿and crops﴾ that is, grains and the fruits of palm trees and other kinds of trees and plants, because of intense cold, hail, burning, plagues of locusts and so on.

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These things will inevitably happen, because the All-Knowing, All-Aware has told us of it, and it happened as He foretold. When it happens, people respond in one of two ways, either impatience or patience. The one who is impatient suffers two calamities: the loss of what he loves, which is the calamity that he has been stricken with, and loss of something greater than that, which is the reward for obeying Allah's command to be patient. Thus he incurs loss and deprivation of reward and whatever he has of faith decreases. He misses out on patience, acceptance and gratitude, and he becomes resentful, which is indicative of a lack of faith.

As for the one whom Allah enables to be patient when calamities occur, he controls himself and stops himself developing any resentment that could be reflected in his words or deeds. He seeks reward for it from Allah, and he knows that the reward he will attain for his patience is greater than the calamity that has befallen him. In his case, the calamity turns into a blessing, because it becomes a means of attaining something better and more beneficial for him than what he lost. So he obeys the command of Allah and earns reward. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere﴾ that is, give them the glad tidings that they will be rewarded without measure.

Those who are patient are those who attain these great glad tidings and immense gifts. Then Allah describes them thus: ﴿who say, when afflicted with calamity﴾ – calamity is anything that causes mental anguish or physical harm, or both, such as the things mentioned above. ﴿To Allah we belong﴾ that is, Allah owns us and we are under His control; we have no control over our own selves and property at all. If we are tested with regard to some of it, then the Most Merciful has decreed something concerning His slaves and their property as He wills, so there should be no objection to Him. Rather it is part of being a true slave of Allah (*'uboodiyah*) to realise that the calamity has been decreed by the Sovereign, the Most Wise, Who is more merciful to him than he is to himself. This gives him a sense of contentment and

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acceptance of Allah's decree, which makes him grateful to Allah for decreeing for His slave that which is good for him, even if he does not realise it. In addition to the fact that we belong to Allah, we will return to Him on the Day of Resurrection, when He will requite each person in accordance with his deeds. So if we show patience and seek reward, we will find our reward waiting for us with Him, but if we are impatient and resentful, our share will be nothing but resentment and the loss of reward. Knowing that we are slaves of Allah and will return to Him is among the greatest means of attaining patience.

﴿They﴾ that is, the ones who have this characteristic of patience as described above

﴿are the ones on whom blessings and mercy from their Lord are [bestowed]﴾ that is, His praising them and highlighting their high status. His mercy is great; by His mercy towards them, He enables them to be patient, by virtue of which they will attain a perfect reward. ﴿and they are the ones who are guided﴾ and who know the truth; they know that they belong to Allah and that they will return to Him, so they act accordingly, thus showing patience for the sake of Allah.

This verse indicates that the one who is not patient will have the opposite of what they have. This implies that he is condemned by Allah and will be punished; it is also indicative of misguidance and loss. How great is the difference between the two types of people; how little is the trouble that the patient may have to bear, and how great is the trouble that the impatient will face. These two verses refer to training oneself to deal with calamity before it happens, so as to make things easier when it does happen; they also tell us what his response should be when calamity strikes, which is to be patient, how to help oneself develop patience, and what those who are patient will have of reward. We also learn that the situation of one who is impatient is the opposite of the situation of one who is patient.

These trials and tests have been Allah's way with those who have gone before, and you will find no change in Allah's way *(33: 62).*

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﴿ ۞ إِنَّ ٱلصَّفَا وَٱلْمَرْوَةَ مِن شَعَآئِرِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ فَمَنْ حَجَّ ٱلْبَيْتَ أَوِ ٱعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَن يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا ۚ وَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٥٨)

2:158. Verily Ṣafā and Marwah are among the symbols of Allah. So whoever comes to the House for Hajj or 'umrah, there is no blame on him for going back and forth between them. And whoever does good of his own accord, then verily Allah is Appreciative, All-Knowing.

Here Allah tells us that Ṣafā and Marwah, which are two well-known hills in Makkah

﴿are among the symbols of Allah﴾ that is, they are visible signs of His religion; Allah has prescribed that His slaves should do acts of worship connected to them (that is, sa'iy: going between Ṣafā and Marwah during Hajj and 'umrah). As they are among the symbols of Allah, and Allah has enjoined veneration of His symbols in the verse:

﴿...And whoever honours the rites of Allah, verily that stems from piety of the hearts.﴾ *(al-Ḥajj 22: 32)*

–the two texts together indicate that they (Ṣafā and Marwah) are indeed among the symbols of Allah and that veneration of His symbols stems from piety of the heart.

Piety is obligatory for everyone who is accountable, so this indicates that going between them (sa'iy) is an obligatory part of Hajj and 'umrah, as is the view of the majority of scholars. That is supported by prophetic hadiths and the actions of the Prophet himself (ﷺ), who said:

«Learn from me your rituals of Hajj.» (Muslim)

﴿So whoever comes to the House for Hajj or 'umrah, there is no blame on him for going back and forth between them﴾. This verse is a response to the misgivings and reservations that some of the Muslims

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had about going back and forth between them, because during the jâhiliyah idols were worshipped at these locations. But Allah (ﷻ) stated that there is nothing wrong with doing that, so as to ward off these misgivings; it does not mean that this action is not obligatory.

The fact that this is specifically connected to Hajj and 'umrah indicates that there is no voluntary sa'iy that may be performed separately; it can only be part of Hajj or 'umrah. This is in contrast to ṭawâf or circumambulation of the Kaaba, which is prescribed as part of Hajj and 'umrah, but is also an act of worship in and of itself.

With regard to sa'iy, standing in 'Arafah and Muzdalifah, and stoning the jamarât, these are part of the rituals; if they are done outside of the rituals, then this comes under the heading of bid'ah (innovation). Innovation is of two types: worshipping Allah by doing an act of worship that was not prescribed at all, and worshipping Allah by doing an act of worship that He has prescribed should be done in a particular manner, in a manner other than that which was prescribed. The latter is applicable in this case.

﴿And whoever does good of his own accord﴾ that is, he does an act of worship, such as Hajj, 'umrah, ṭawâf, prayer, fasting and so on, sincerely for the sake of Allah (ﷻ), that is good for him. This indicates that the more a person does of acts of obedience, the more he increases in goodness, spiritual development, and status before Allah, because of the increase in his faith.

It also indicates that voluntary acts should be restricted to those that are good, because doing innovated actions of one's own accord, that were not prescribed by Allah or His Messenger (ﷺ), does not achieve anything but effort and troubles for no purpose. This is not good for the individual; rather it may be bad for him, if he did that deliberately, knowing that this act is not prescribed.

﴿then verily Allah is Appreciative, All-Knowing﴾. Ash-Shâkir (the Appreciative) and ash-Shakoor (the Most Appreciative) are among the

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names of Allah (ﷻ), Who accepts small deeds from His slaves and rewards them abundantly for them. If His slave follows His commands and obeys Him, He will help him in that, praise him for it and reward him with light, faith and contentment in his heart, as well as physical strength and energy, and increased blessing in all his affairs; and He will help him to do more good deeds.

Then after that, in the hereafter he will find his reward with his Lord, complete and ready for him, with nothing detracted from it.

Another aspect of Allah's appreciation towards His slave is that if anyone gives up something for the sake of Allah, He will reward him with something better than it; whoever draws nears to Him a hand's span, He will draw near to him an arm's length; whoever draws near to Him an arm's length, He will draw near to him a fathom's length; and whoever comes to Him walking, He will come to him at speed. Whoever deals with Him will make multiple gains in reward.

Whilst He is Appreciative, He is also All-Knowing; He knows who is deserving of complete reward, according to his intentions, faith and piety, and He knows who is not like that. He knows the deeds of His slaves, and He will not let them go to waste; rather they will find them in the greatest abundance, according to the intentions that are known to the All-Knowing, Most Wise.




﴿ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَآ أَنزَلْنَا مِنَ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ وَٱلْهُدَىٰ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِى
ٱلْكِتَٰبِ ۙ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ ٱللَّٰعِنُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ تَابُوا۟ وَأَصْلَحُوا۟
وَبَيَّنُوا۟ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ وَأَنَا ٱلتَّوَّابُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦٠﴾ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ وَمَاتُوا۟ وَهُمْ
كُفَّارٌ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ وَٱلنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا ۖ لَا يُخَفَّفُ
عَنْهُمُ ٱلْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿١٦٢﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٥٩-١٦٢)

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2:159. Those who conceal the clear signs and guidance that We have sent down, after We have made it clear for the people in the Book – on them shall be the curse of Allah, and the curse of the cursers,

2:160. Except those who repent and mend their ways and openly declare [what they used to conceal]; they are the ones whose repentance I will accept, for I am the Accepter of repentance, the Most Merciful.

2:161. Those who disbelieve, and die as disbelievers – upon them is the curse of Allah and of the angels and of all humankind.

2:162. They will remain under it [the curse] forever. The punishment will not be reduced for them, nor will they be given any reprieve.

Although these verses were revealed concerning the People of the Book and what they concealed concerning the Messenger (ﷺ) and his attributes, the ruling is general in meaning and applies to everyone who conceals that which Allah revealed of ﴿clear signs﴾ that confirm and highlight the truth ﴿and guidance﴾, which is knowledge by means of which one is guided to the straight path, and the path that leads to paradise becomes distinct from the path of the people of hell. Allah took a covenant from people of knowledge, that they should explain to the people what Allah has blessed them with of knowledge of the Book and should not conceal it, for whoever ignores the covenant and combines the two evils, of concealing that which Allah has revealed and deceiving the slaves of Allah,

﴿on them shall be the curse of Allah﴾ that is, He will cast them far away from Him and His mercy.

﴿and the curse of the cursers﴾ – this refers to all of creation. The curse will befall them from all of creation, because they strove to mislead people, corrupt their religion and take them away from the mercy of Allah. Thus their punishment will fit their crime. By the same token, if someone teaches the people good, Allah will send blessings upon

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him, as will His angels, and even the fish in the depths of the sea, for his efforts to benefit people, teach them their religion properly and bring them closer to the mercy of Allah. Thus the reward will fit his good deeds. The one who conceals that which Allah revealed has gone against the command of Allah and is opposing Him. Allah explains the signs to people and clarifies them, but this person tried to conceal them. This stern warning applies to such a one.

﴿Except those who repent﴾ that is, give up their sins out of regret and resolve not to go back to them
﴿and mend their ways﴾, correcting their corrupt actions. It is not sufficient just to give up doing bad deeds unless they are replaced with good deeds. It is not sufficient in the case of one who conceals knowledge either, unless he makes known what he was concealing and shows the opposite of what he was hiding. In that case Allah will accept his repentance, because there is no barrier preventing one from attaining His acceptance of repentance. Whoever meets the conditions of repentance, Allah will accept it from him, for He is the Accepter of repentance; in other words, He forgives and pardons His slaves after they commit sin, if they repent, and He grants them His blessing and favour after having withheld it, if they turn back to Him.
﴿the Most Merciful﴾, Who is possessed of great compassion that encompasses all things. By His mercy, He guides and enables them to repent, then by His mercy, He accepts it from them, out of kindness and generosity. This ruling applies to one who repents from sin. As for the one who disbelieves and persists in his disbelief until he dies, and does not turn back to his Lord or hasten to repent to Him, he is among those ﴿upon﴾ whom ﴿is the curse of Allah and of the angels and of all humankind﴾, because when their disbelief became an entrenched characteristic, the curse likewise became entrenched and will never depart, because when the reason is present, the ruling still applies.

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﴿They will remain under it [the curse] forever﴾ that is, they will remain subject to the curse. This phrase may also mean that they will remain subject to the punishment; both meanings are interlinked. ﴿The punishment will not be reduced for them﴾; rather their punishment will be ongoing and severe ﴿nor will they be given any reprieve﴾ that is, the punishment will not be delayed, because the time for reprieve, which was in this world, has ended and they can no longer give any excuse.




﴿وَإِلَٰهُكُمْ إِلَٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۖ لَّا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَٰنُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦٣﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٦٣)

2:163. And your God is One God: There is no god but He, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Here Allah (ﷻ), Who is the Most Truthful, tells us that He is ﴿One God﴾ that is, He is One and unique; there is nothing like unto Him in His essence, names, attributes, and actions. He has no partner in His essence, no equal, none like unto Him, none comparable to Him, no peer; there is no creator or controller apart from Him. As that is the case, He is the only One Who deserves to be venerated and worshipped in all ways. Nothing of His creation should be associated with Him, because He is ﴿the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful﴾, Who is possessed of great mercy that cannot be matched by the mercy of anyone else, for it encompasses all things and all living beings. By His mercy, all His creation came into existence; by His mercy, all good and necessary qualities are possessed by His creation; by His mercy, all harm is warded off from them; by His mercy, He has made Himself known to His slaves through His attributes and His blessings; He has explained to them everything they need and is in their best interests in their religious and worldly affairs, by sending the Messengers and

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revealing the Books. Once it is known that whatever people have of blessings is from Allah, and that no one in creation can benefit anyone else, this leads to the conclusion that Allah is the only One Who is deserving of all kinds of worship; He is the only One Who is to be loved, feared and venerated, in whom hopes are to be placed and in whom we should trust, and all other kinds of worship.

One of the worst and most abhorrent kinds of transgression is turning away from worship of Allah to worship of His slaves, and to associate those who were created from dust with the Lord of Lords, or to worship a created being that is controlled and helpless in all aspects alongside the Creator Who is in control, the All-Powerful, the Most Strong, Who has subjugated all things and everything is subservient to Him.

In this verse, the oneness and divinity of the Creator are affirmed, by denying that any created being is like Him, and by highlighting the basic evidence for that, which is the affirmation of His mercy, among the results of which are the existence of all blessings and the warding off of all harms. This is evidence, in general terms, of His oneness. In the next verse, detailed evidence is given:

 

﴿إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِن مَّاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيَاحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٦٤)

2:164. Verily in the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the night and the day; in the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the benefit of humankind, in the rain which Allah sends down from the skies, and the life which He gives

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thereby to an earth that is dead, in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters throughout the earth; in the changing of the winds and clouds that run their appointed courses between heaven and earth – [here] are indeed signs for people of understanding.

Here, Allah tells us that in these created beings there are great signs, that is, evidence of the oneness and divinity of the Creator, and of His great power, mercy and all other attributes. But they are signs ﴿for people of understanding﴾ that is, for those who use their minds for the purpose for which they were created. So according to the level of rational thinking with which Allah has blessed His slave, that person will be able to benefit from these signs, and recognise them by way of his reasoning, thinking and pondering. In the ﴿creation of the heavens﴾, with their great height and breadth, their precision and perfection, and what Allah has placed in them of the sun, moon, and stars, and how they mark time in the ordering of people's affairs, and in the creation of ﴿the earth﴾ as a place where they could settle and abide, benefiting from everything in it and pondering it, there is an indication of Allah's unique powers of creation and control; this highlights His immense power by which He created it; His wisdom by means of which He perfected it, designed it beautifully, and regulated it; and His knowledge and mercy by means of which He placed what He placed on earth of things that are beneficial to humankind, serving their interests and meeting their needs.

In all of that there is the most eloquent proof of His perfection and that He alone is deserving of worship, because He alone creates and controls, and takes care of His slaves' affairs.

﴿in the alternation of the night and the day﴾, which constantly follow one another; when one departs, it is succeeded by the other. This alternation of night and day results in alternation between heat and cold and moderate temperatures, and between long and short days and days of moderate length. All of that in turn leads to the

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seasons, the order of which brings great benefits to the sons of Adam and their livestock, and to everything that is on the face of the earth of trees and plants. All of that is in accordance with a system and plan, in such a way that dazzles the most brilliant of minds. This is indicative of Allah's great might, knowledge, wisdom, vast mercy, all-encompassing kindness and full control which is His alone. His might is the might of sovereignty and power, which dictates that He alone should be venerated and worshipped, and He is the only One Who should be loved, the only One Whom we should fear and in Whom we should put our hope, and strive to attain His love and pleasure.

﴿in the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the benefit of humankind﴾ – this refers to ships, boats and other vessels that Allah inspired His slaves to make, and created for them the mental and physical means of making them. Then He subjugated this vast ocean for them, and the winds by means of which they move, carrying passengers, wealth and goods that are essential conveniences for people, in such a way that serves their interests. Who is it that inspired them to make them, enabled them to do so, and created for them the means of making them? Who is it that subjugated the sea for them, so that they travel in it by His leave and His subjugation of the winds? Who is it that created fire and metal for vehicles and vessels on land and sea, which helps to carry them and what they contain of wealth? Did these things happen randomly, or are they all made by this weak and vulnerable creature who emerged from his mother's womb with no knowledge or ability, then Allah created that ability in him and taught him what He wanted to teach him? Or was all of that subjugated to them by One Lord, Most Wise and All-Knowing, for Whom nothing is beyond Him and nothing is too difficult for Him. Indeed all things are subject to His Lordship, greatness and might.

The best that can be said about this weak human being is that Allah has made him part of the means by which these great things came into existence. This indicates that Allah is merciful and cares for

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His creation. All of this dictates that all love, fear, hope, obedience, humility and veneration should be for Allah alone.

﴿in the rain which Allah sends down from the skies﴾, and it comes down from the clouds
﴿and the life which He gives thereby to an earth that is dead﴾, and it brings forth all kinds of provisions and all types of plants, without which humans and animals cannot live.

Is this not indicative of the might of the One Who sent it down, and brought forth by means of it what He brought forth? Is it not indicative of His mercy and kindness to His slaves, and His taking care of their interests? Is it not indicative of the greatness of their need for Him in all aspects? Does that not dictate that He alone should be their God Whom they worship? Is that not evidence for the resurrection of the dead and their requital for their deeds?

﴿in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters throughout the earth﴾ that is, that He spreads throughout all regions of the earth, or of different kinds of animals. This is indicative of His might, greatness, oneness, and sovereignty. He subjugated them for humankind, so that they benefit from them in all ways: they eat the flesh of some of them and drink their milk; they ride some of them, and use others for various tasks and to guard them; they learn lessons from some of them. As He has scattered beasts of all kinds throughout the earth, He also takes care of their provision; there is no living creature on earth but its provision is due from Allah; He knows where it lives and where it dies.

﴿in the changing of the winds and clouds﴾ hot and cold, north and south, east and west, and everything in between. Sometimes the wind generates clouds; sometimes it joins the clouds together (into a heap); sometimes it fecundates the clouds; sometimes it causes rain; sometimes it breaks up the clouds, removing their harm; sometimes it brings mercy and sometimes it brings punishment.

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Who is it that controls the winds in this way, and creates in them benefits for people which they cannot do without? Who is it that generates them so that they become a means of survival for all kinds of animals and all living things, such as trees, grains and plants? It can be none other than the Almighty, the Most Wise, the Most Merciful, Who is kind to His slaves and is deserving of all humility, submission, love, devotion and worship.

In the subjugation of the clouds between heaven and earth, which despite their lightness and fragility carry a great deal of water, which Allah drives wherever He wills, and it brings life to the land and the people, irrigating the hills and valleys, is an indication of His great power, kindness and mercy. He sends the rain down to humankind at the time of need, but if they will be harmed by its abundance, He withholds it from them. He sends it down as a mercy and kindness, and directs it in accordance with His care and compassion.

Is it not reprehensible on the part of His slaves that they should enjoy His provision and live by His kindness, yet they use it for sinful purposes that incur His wrath? Is this not indicative of His forbearance, patience and tolerance, and of the extent of His kindness? Praise be to Him at all times and in all circumstances.

The point is that the more a man of understanding thinks of Allah's creation and thoroughly examines the wonders thereof, the more he thinks of the amazing design and what He has created in it of things that are indicative of His kindness and wisdom, he will realise that it was created for the truth and by the truth; it is an open book of signs and evidence that point to what Allah has told us about Himself and His oneness, and what the Messengers have told us about the Last Day, and that all people are subjugated to His control and have no control over themselves and no power to resist.

Thus you should realise that all of creation, in heaven and on earth, are in desperate need of Him. He is the One Who is independent of

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means in and of Himself, and has no need of any of His creation. There is no god but Allah and there is no lord besides Him.

 

﴿ وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِّلَّهِ ۗ وَلَوْ يَرَى ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوٓا۟ إِذْ يَرَوْنَ ٱلْعَذَابَ أَنَّ ٱلْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَدِيدُ ٱلْعَذَابِ ﴿١٦٥﴾ إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتُّبِعُوا۟ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّبَعُوا۟ وَرَأَوُا۟ ٱلْعَذَابَ وَتَقَطَّعَتْ بِهِمُ ٱلْأَسْبَابُ ﴿١٦٦﴾ وَقَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّبَعُوا۟ لَوْ أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَتَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُمْ كَمَا تَبَرَّءُوا۟ مِنَّا ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ يُرِيهِمُ ٱللَّهُ أَعْمَٰلَهُمْ حَسَرَٰتٍ عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ وَمَا هُم بِخَٰرِجِينَ مِنَ ٱلنَّارِ ﴿١٦٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٦٥-١٦٧)

2:165. Yet there are some people who take [for worship] others besides Allah, as equals [with Allah]; they love them as they should love Allah. But those who believe have greater love for Allah. When the transgressors see the punishment, they will realise that all power belongs to Allah and that Allah is severe in punishment.

2:166. When those who were followed disavow those who followed [them], and they see the punishment, and all ties between them are severed,

2:167. And those who followed say: If only we had one more chance, we would disavow them, as they have disavowed us, thus Allah will show them their deeds as a cause of bitter regret. They will never emerge from the fire.

How beautiful is this verse; after having explained in the previous verse His oneness and the definitive evidence for it, and the clear proof that leads to certain knowledge and removes all doubts, Allah tells us here that there are ﴿some people﴾ who, despite this clear explanation, take some created beings as equals with Allah; that is,

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they regard them as His peers and see them as being equal to Allah with regard to worship, love, veneration, and obedience.

The one who is like that – even after proof has been established and Allah's oneness has been clearly explained – must be stubbornly opposed to Allah, or he must have turned away from pondering His signs and His creation. He does not have the slightest excuse for that; rather he is deserving of the punishment. These people who take others as equal to Allah do not say that they are equal to Him in terms of creating, granting provision and controlling; rather they think that they are equal to Him in terms of worship, so they worship them in order that they might bring them closer to Him.

The word ﴿take﴾ indicates that Allah has no equal; rather the polytheists regard some created beings as equal to Him, but this is no more than a notion in their minds, and is devoid of any meaning, as Allah says:

﴿...And yet they ascribe partners to Allah. Say: Name them; or do you presume to tell Allah of something that He does not know on earth, or is it [just] a show of words?...﴾ *(ar-Ra'd 13: 33)*

﴿They are no more than names you have named, you and your forefathers, for which Allah has not sent down any authority. They follow nothing but conjecture...﴾ *(an-Najm 53: 23)*

A created being cannot be equal to Allah, because He is the Creator and everything else is created; He is the Lord and Provider, and everything else is provided for. Allah is the One Who is independent of means, and you are dependent; He is perfect in all ways and you are lacking in all ways; Allah is the One Who brings benefits and causes harm, and created beings have no power to bring benefit or cause harm, for they have no power at all. Thus it is known for certain that those who take anything other than Allah as gods whom they regard as equal to Him, whether that is an angel, a Prophet, a righteous man, an idol or anything else, is misguided, and that Allah is the only One

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Who is deserving of all love and complete humility. Hence Allah praises the believers by saying: ﴿But those who believe have greater love for Allah﴾ that is, they are sincere to Him alone in their love, whereas these people set up others whom they regard as equal to Him and worship them alongside Him; the believers love the only One Who is deserving of love in an absolute sense, love of Whom is the essence of a person's well-being, happiness, and salvation, whereas the polytheists love those who are not deserving of any love at all, and their love is the essence of a person's misery, corruption and loss.

Hence Allah warned them: ﴿When the transgressors﴾ that is, those who transgressed by taking others for worship besides Allah, as equals with Him, submitted to something other than the Lord of all, and wronged people by preventing them from following the path of Allah and striving to cause them harm.

﴿see the punishment﴾ that is, on the Day of Resurrection, when they will see it with their own eyes

﴿they will realise that all power belongs to Allah and that Allah is severe in punishment﴾ that is, then they will realise with certainty that all power belongs to Allah alone, and that their false gods have no power at all. Thus it will become clear to them how weak and incapable they (the false gods) are and that they are not as they mistakenly thought they were in this world, when they thought that they had some power and that they could bring them closer to Allah. They will see that their expectations were wrong, their efforts were wasted and they are deserving of a severe punishment that their false gods cannot ward off from them or offer them the slightest help. Rather harm will reach them because of those false gods, whereas they thought that they would benefit them.

Those who were followed will disavow the followers, and any ties that existed between them in this world will be severed, because these ties were for the sake of something other than Allah and were not in accordance with the command of Allah; rather they were based

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on utter falsehood. Thus their efforts will be wasted and they will be doomed, and they will realise that they (those who were followed) were liars; their deeds that they hoped would benefit them will turn into a source of regret and sorrow for them; and they will abide forever in the fire and will never be brought out of it. Can there be any greater loss than this? That is because they followed falsehood and acted accordingly, pinning their hopes on that in which there was no hope, and forming an attachment to that which was not deserving of it. Hence their deeds will be rendered invalid because of the invalidity of the foundation of those deeds, and at that point sorrow will overtake them for their dashed hopes of reward and the ultimate harm that befalls them. This is unlike those who put their hopes in Allah, the Sovereign, the Truth, and sincerely strive for His sake, hoping for His mercy. Such a one has acted appropriately, so his deeds are valid, because they are based on truth. Thus he will attain the positive result of his efforts, and he will find his reward with his Lord in abundance, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Those who disbelieve and bar others from the path of Allah, He will cause their deeds to come to naught. Those who believe and do righteous deeds, and believe in that which was sent down to Muhammad – for it is the truth from their Lord – He will absolve them of their bad deeds and rectify their condition. That is because those who disbelieve follow falsehood and those who believe follow the truth from their Lord. Thus does Allah set forth for humankind their comparisons.﴾ *(Muhammad 47: 1-3)*

Then the followers will wish that they could be returned to this world so that they might disavow what they followed, give up associating others with Allah, and strive hard for the sake of Allah alone. But alas it will be too late; it will no longer be the time for respite or reprieve. Moreover, they will be lying, because if they did return (to this world), they would go back to their previous ways. These are no more than empty words and wishful thinking on their

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part, out of resentment towards those whom they followed, when the latter disavow them, even though the blame is theirs. The leader of those who were followed in evil is Iblees; nevertheless he will say to his followers when judgement is passed:

﴿...Verily, Allah gave you a true promise; I also gave you promises, but I betrayed you. I had no power over you, except that I called you and you responded to me. So do not blame me; blame yourselves...﴾ *(Ibraheem 14: 22)*

 

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ كُلُوا۟ مِمَّا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ حَلَٰلًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا۟ خُطُوَٰتِ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٦٨﴾ إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُم بِٱلسُّوٓءِ وَٱلْفَحْشَآءِ وَأَن تَقُولُوا۟ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ ٱتَّبِعُوا۟ مَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ قَالُوا۟ بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَآ أَلْفَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ ءَابَآءَنَآ ۚ أَوَلَوْ كَانَ ءَابَآؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْـًٔا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٦٨-١٧٠)

2:168. O humankind, eat whatever is lawful and good on earth, and do not follow the footsteps of the Shaytân, for he is to you an avowed enemy.

2:169. For he only commands you to do evil and shameful deeds, and to say concerning Allah that of which you have no knowledge.

2:170. When it is said to them: Follow what Allah has revealed, they say: Nay, we will follow the ways of our forefathers. [Would they do that] even though their forefathers did not understand a thing and were not guided?

This is addressed to all people, believers and disbelievers alike, reminding them of Allah's blessings to them and instructing them to eat from everything that is on earth, such as grains, crops, fruits and animals, so long as it is ﴿lawful [halal]﴾, that is, it is permissible for you to eat it, and it has not been usurped or stolen, acquired by means

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of a prohibited transaction or in a forbidden manner, and that it is not used to help in committing forbidden actions.
﴿good﴾ that is, it is not evil or filthy (*khabeeth*), such as dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine and all other unclean things. This verse indicates that the basic principle is that things are permissible to eat and make use of, and that what is forbidden is of two types: either that which is forbidden in and of itself, which is evil or filthy things that are the opposite of good, or it is forbidden for some other reason, namely its connection to the rights of Allah or to the rights of people; this is the opposite of what is permissible. It also indicates that one may eat as much of (something haram) as is necessary to survive; this is obligatory, and the one who does not do that is sinning.

When Allah commanded them to follow what He enjoined upon them, which is in their own best interests, He forbade them to follow ﴿the footsteps of the Shayṭân﴾ that is, to follow the ways that he enjoins. This refers to all sins, such as disbelief, evildoing, and transgression. That also includes the prohibition on the *sâ'ibah* and *ḥâm*[13] and the like. That also includes eating haram (forbidden) foods.

﴿for he is to you an avowed enemy﴾ that is, his enmity is blatant; all he wants to do is deceive you and cause you to become among the inhabitants of hell. Our Lord did not only forbid us to follow his footsteps; rather He also told us – and He is the most truthful – of his enmity, of which we should beware. Furthermore, He told us details of what the Shayṭân wants to make us do, and that it is the most reprehensible and evil of things:

﴿For he only commands you to do evil﴾ that is, any bad deed that harms the one who does it. That includes all kinds of sins ﴿and shameful deeds﴾. This is an example of mentioning specific matters after having spoken in general terms, because shameful

[13] The sâ'ibah and ḥâm were types of camels that were set loose to pasture freely in honour of idols during the jâhiliyah, and it was forbidden to make use of them.

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deeds are one type of sin and evil that is extremely abhorrent, such as fornication or adultery, drinking alcohol, murder, slander, miserliness, and other deeds that any wise person would regard as abhorrent.

﴿and to say concerning Allah that of which you have no knowledge﴾. This includes speaking about Allah's laws and decrees without knowledge. The one who ascribes to Allah something that He has not ascribed to Himself or that His Messenger (ﷺ) has not ascribed to Him, or denies an attribute that Allah has affirmed for Himself, or affirms an attribute that Allah has denied for Himself, has spoken about Allah without knowledge. The one who claims that Allah has an equal, and that idols will bring the one who worships them closer to Allah, has spoken about Allah without knowledge. The one who says that Allah has permitted or prohibited specific things, or that He has enjoined or forbidden specific things, without any understanding, has spoken about Allah without knowledge. The one who says that Allah created a specific type of creatures for a specific reason without having any evidence to that effect has spoken about Allah without knowledge.

One of the most serious kinds of speaking about Allah without knowledge is misinterpreting His words or those of His Messenger (ﷺ) in such a way that coincides with the interpretation of some misguided group, then saying that this is what Allah meant. Speaking about Allah without knowledge is one of the most serious of prohibited actions and one of the most favoured methods of the Shaytân, who promotes it. These are the ways of the Shaytân, to which he and his troops call people, doing their utmost to tempt people in whatever ways they can.

In contrast, Allah (ﷻ) enjoins justice, kindness and generosity towards relatives, and He forbids shameful deeds, injustice and transgression. So the individual must check himself and see which of the two callers he is following, and which party he is with. Are you following the caller of Allah, Who is benevolent and wants happiness

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for you in this world and the hereafter? For success and salvation are to be found in following Him, and you have everything to gain from forming an attachment to Him, for He grants all blessings, both obvious and hidden, He enjoins only what is good and forbids only what is evil. Or are you following the caller of the Shaytân, who is the enemy of humanity? He wishes you ill and is striving his utmost to bring you destruction in this world and in the hereafter; all evil is in obeying him and all loss results from taking him as a friend; he enjoins nothing but evil and forbids nothing but good.

Then Allah tells us of the situation of the polytheists: when they were commanded to follow that which Allah had revealed to His Messenger (ﷺ) – as described above – they turned away from that and said: ﴿Nay, we will follow the ways of our forefathers﴾. They were content to blindly follow the ways of their forefathers, and they had no interest in believing in the Prophets. Moreover, their forefathers were the most ignorant of people and the most misguided, and this is a flimsy argument for rejecting the truth. This is indicative of their turning away from the truth, their lack of interest in it and the absence of any fair-mindedness in them. If they were guided and had good intentions, then truth would have been their main aim. The one who makes truth his main aim and measures everything against that will definitely see the truth clearly and will follow it, if he is fair-minded.




﴿ وَمَثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ كَمَثَلِ ٱلَّذِى يَنْعِقُ بِمَا لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دُعَآءً وَنِدَآءً ۚ صُمٌّۢ بُكْمٌ عُمْىٌ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٧١﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٧١)

2:171. The likeness of those who disbelieve is that of animals whom the herdsman calls, but they hear nothing except the sound of shouts and cries. Deaf, dumb, and blind, they do not understand.

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As Allah stated that they did not accept what the Messengers brought, and the reason for that was their blind following (of their forefathers), it becomes clear from that that they were not receptive to the truth and did not respond to it; rather it is easy to conclude that they would never give up their stubborn ways. Allah tells us that people who respond in this manner when they are called to faith are like animals whom the herdsman calls, but they have no understanding of what the one who is calling them is saying; all they hear is the voice by which proof is established against them, but they do not understand it in any way that could benefit them. Hence they are deaf and cannot hear the truth with any understanding; they are blind and cannot see in such a way that they could learn and ponder; they are dumb and cannot say what is good for them.

The reason for all of that is that they have no sound reasoning; rather they are the most foolish and the most ignorant. Can any wise man who was called to right guidance, told to avoid evil deeds, warned against exposing himself to punishment and enjoined to do that which will lead to his well-being, success, salvation and bliss disobey the one who is sincerely advising him, turn away from what his Lord enjoined upon him, throw himself willingly into the fire, follow falsehood and turn away from truth? Such a one does not possess an iota of common sense, and he is deceitful and shrewd; rather he is the most foolish of fools.




﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ كُلُواْ مِن طَيِّبَٰتِ مَا رَزَقۡنَٰكُمۡ وَٱشۡكُرُواْ لِلَّهِ إِن كُنتُمۡ إِيَّاهُ تَعۡبُدُونَ ١٧٢ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيۡكُمُ ٱلۡمَيۡتَةَ وَٱلدَّمَ وَلَحۡمَ ٱلۡخِنزِيرِ وَمَآ أُهِلَّ بِهِۦ لِغَيۡرِ ٱللَّهِۖ فَمَنِ ٱضۡطُرَّ غَيۡرَ بَاغٖ وَلَا عَادٖ فَلَآ إِثۡمَ عَلَيۡهِۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٞ رَّحِيمٌ ١٧٣ ﴾

(سورة البقرة: ١٧٢-١٧٣)

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2:172. O you who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided for you, and be grateful to Allah, if it is Him you worship.

2:173. He has only forbidden you dead meat, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that on which any name has been invoked other than that of Allah. But if one is forced by necessity, without wilful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits, then there is no sin on him. For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

This is a command to the believers in particular, after a command addressed to all of humanity, for they are the ones who really benefit from the commands and prohibitions, because of their faith. Here Allah enjoined them to eat of the good things that He has provided, and to be grateful to Allah for His blessings, by only using them in ways that will bring them closer to Him. This is the same command that He gave to the Messengers, when He said:

﴿O Messengers, eat of that which is wholesome and do righteous deeds...﴾ *(al-Mu'minoon 23: 51)*

In this verse, "gratitude" refers to doing righteous deeds. Here, Allah did not say "whatever is lawful (halal)" because Allah has permitted to the believer all good things that He has provided that are free of any negative consequences. Moreover, his faith will keep him from consuming anything that is not his.

﴿if it is Him you worship﴾ that is, then give thanks to Him. This indicates that the one who does not give thanks to Allah is not worshipping Him alone, whilst the one who does give thanks to Him is worshipping Him alone and has done what He enjoined. It also indicates that eating good things is the means of doing righteous deeds and of them being accepted. The command to give thanks comes immediately after mention of the blessing, because gratitude protects existing blessings and brings blessings that are missing, whereas ingratitude drives away blessings that are missing and causes existing blessings to be lost.

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When Allah (ﷻ) mentions the permissibility of good things, He also mentions the prohibition on evil or filthy things, as He says: ﴿He has only forbidden you dead meat﴾. This refers to animals that died without being properly slaughtered in accordance with Sharia, because dead meat is filthy and harmful, and is bad in and of itself. Moreover, it is most likely that it died of some disease, in which case it is even more harmful. The Lawgiver makes an exception from this general rule with regard to dead locusts and fish, which are permissible and good.

﴿and blood﴾ that is, blood that has been "poured forth" (this refers to blood that has drained out of the carcass), as has been explained elsewhere. *(al-An'ām 6: 145)*

﴿and that on which any name has been invoked other than that of Allah﴾ that is, that which has been sacrificed to anything other than Allah, such as that which is sacrificed for idols, stones, graves and so on. This verse does not list everything that is prohibited; rather it highlights types of evil things, which are the opposite of ﴿the good things﴾. What is haram in general terms is implicit in the verse quoted above, as the opposite of ﴿whatever is lawful and good﴾ *(2: 168)*.

These evil things and others are forbidden to us out of kindness towards us and so as to protect us from harm. However, ﴿if one is forced by necessity﴾ that is, if he is compelled by starvation or want, or he is forced,

﴿without wilful disobedience﴾ that is, without actively seeking that which is haram when he is able to obtain that which is halal, or when he is not starving,

﴿nor transgressing due limits﴾, that is, without overstepping the mark in consuming that which has been permitted to him out of necessity. So if a person is forced out of necessity and is not able to find any halal food, then he may eat only so much (of the available haram food) as is necessary, and no more than that.

﴿then there is no sin on him﴾.

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As there is no sin on him, it becomes permissible. In such cases the individual is commanded to eat, and in fact it is forbidden to contribute to his own destruction or to kill himself.

In that case it is obligatory for him to eat, and he is sinning if he does not eat and that results in his death, because then he would have effectively killed himself. This concession and flexibility is part of Allah's mercy towards His slaves. Hence the verse ends with two names of Allah that are particularly appropriate in this context: ﴿For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾.

Because this permissibility and concession is connected to these two conditions, and the person who finds himself in this situation may not be able to adhere properly to them, Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He is Oft-Forgiving, so He will forgive any mistakes made in this situation, especially if it is a case of necessity and hardship which resulted in him not being able to realise when he should stop eating.

This verse is also indicative of the well-known principle, "Necessity makes permissible that which is (ordinarily) forbidden." Any haram thing that a person is compelled to do is permitted to him by the Most Merciful. To Him be praise first and last, in the heart and on the lips.




﴿إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ مِنَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ وَيَشْتَرُونَ بِهِۦ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۙ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ مَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِى بُطُونِهِمْ إِلَّا ٱلنَّارَ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ ٱللَّهُ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٤﴾ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱشْتَرَوُا۟ ٱلضَّلَٰلَةَ بِٱلْهُدَىٰ وَٱلْعَذَابَ بِٱلْمَغْفِرَةِ ۚ فَمَآ أَصْبَرَهُمْ عَلَى ٱلنَّارِ ﴿١٧٥﴾ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ نَزَّلَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ بِٱلْحَقِّ ۗ وَإِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فِى ٱلْكِتَٰبِ لَفِى شِقَاقٍۭ بَعِيدٍ ﴿١٧٦﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٧٤-١٧٦)

2:174. Those who conceal what Allah has sent down of the Book and sell it for a small price take nothing into their bellies but fire.

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Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection nor will He purify them, and theirs will be a painful punishment.

2:175. They are the ones who have traded guidance for misguidance, and forgiveness for punishment. What can make them patient in facing the fire?

2:176. That is because Allah sent down the Book in truth; those who find [a cause of] disagreement in the Book go much too far in opposition.

This is a stern warning addressed to those who conceal that which Allah sent down to His Messengers, the knowledge concerning which Allah had taken a covenant from them that they would disclose it to the people and not conceal it; those who use it for worldly gain and neglect the command of Allah, ﴿take nothing into their bellies but fire﴾. That is because the price they gain is only acquired in the worst and most emphatically forbidden manner; thus their punishment will fit the nature of their deeds.

﴿Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection﴾; rather He will be angry with them and will turn away from them. This is a more painful punishment for them than the punishment of hellfire.

﴿nor will He purify them﴾ that is, He will not purify them of bad characteristics, and they have no good deeds to their credit for which they might deserve praise,[14] approval and reward. Rather He will not purify them because their actions deprived them of any purification, the most important means of attaining which is acting in accordance with the Book of Allah, following its guidance and calling others to it.

These people cast aside the Book of Allah and turned away from it; they chose misguidance over guidance and punishment over forgiveness, hence they are fit for nothing but the fire, and what can make them patient in facing the fire? Where could they get such endurance from?

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[14] The word translated here as ﴿purify﴾ may also mean "praise".

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﴿That﴾ namely what is mentioned above of just requital and being deprived of the means of guidance, in the case of those who rejected it and chose something else,
﴿is because Allah sent down the Book in truth﴾, and it is on the basis of the truth that the one who does good deeds will be rewarded and the one who does bad deeds will be punished. Moreover, the phrase ﴿Allah sent down the Book in truth﴾ indicates that Allah sent it down in order to guide humankind and to distinguish truth from falsehood and guidance from misguidance. So whoever uses the Book for purposes other than those for which it was revealed deserves to be subjected to the greatest punishment.

﴿those who find [a cause of] disagreement in the Book go much too far in opposition﴾ that is, those who differed concerning the Book, believing in part of it and rejecting part of it, or those who distort it in accordance with their whims and desires
﴿go much too far in opposition﴾ to the truth, because they have differed from the Book which brought truth that dictates agreement, not dissent. Thus they ended up in trouble, and their opposition increased and resulted in division, unlike the followers of the Book who believed in it and let it rule their lives in all aspects. Hence they were united and developed harmony on the basis of the Book.

These verses also include a warning to those who conceal that which Allah has revealed, giving precedence to worldly gain, of Allah's punishment and wrath, for Allah will not purify them or forgive them. The reason for that is their giving precedence to misguidance over guidance, which resulted in their choosing punishment over forgiveness.

This is followed by a question wondering how much patience they can have when facing the fire, because they were aware of the causes that would lead them to that. They also knew that what the Book contained of truth should unite them, not divide them, and that

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anyone who went against it would stray from the truth and go much too far in opposition. And Allah knows best.




﴿۞ لَّيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَن تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَٰكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا ۖ وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٧٧)

2:177. It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards east or west; rather righteousness is to believe in Allah and the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the Prophets; to spend from your wealth, despite your love for it, on kinsfolk, orphans, the needy, wayfarers and those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to establish prayer and give zakâh; to fulfil the covenants you make; to be patient in the face of hardship and adversity, and in times of conflict. Such are the true believers, and such are the pious.

﴿It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards east or west﴾ that is, this is not the righteousness that is expected from people, therefore discussing it at length and arguing about it is a kind of effort that only leads to division and dispute. This is similar to the words of the Prophet (ﷺ):

«The strong man is not the one who wrestles others to the ground; rather the strong man is the one who controls himself when he is angry.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

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– and so on.

﴿rather righteousness is to believe in Allah﴾ that is, that He is one God, He possesses all the attributes of perfection and is far above all shortcomings.

﴿and the Last Day﴾. This refers to everything that Allah has told us in His Book, or that the Messengers have told us, of what happens after death.

﴿the angels﴾ whom Allah has described to us in His Book, and His Messenger (ﷺ) has also described.

﴿the Book﴾ this refers to all the Books that Allah sent down to His Messengers, the greatest of which is the Qur'an. Thus we believe in all that it contains of stories and rulings

﴿and the Prophets﴾ in general, and especially the last and best of them, Muhammad (ﷺ).

﴿to spend from your wealth﴾ this refers to everything that an individual may possess of wealth, whether it is great or small. What is meant is giving

﴿despite your love for it﴾ that is, love of wealth. Here Allah highlights the fact that wealth is something that people love and find it hard to give to others.

If a person gives of his wealth, despite his love for it, in order to draw closer to Allah (ﷻ), this is indicative of his faith. Part of giving one's wealth despite one's love for it is to give charity when one is healthy and inclined to be stingy, hoping to become rich and fearing poverty. Similarly, giving charity when one does not have much is better, because in this situation one may want to keep it because of what is expected of need and poverty. It is also better to give what is precious and what one loves of one's wealth, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿You will never attain righteousness until you spend [in charity] of that which you love...﴾ *(Âl 'Imrân 3: 92)*

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All of those who do these things are among those who give their wealth despite their love for it.

Then Allah tells us of those on whom it is to be spent, who are the most deserving of your kindness, such as ﴿kinsfolk﴾, those whose joys and sorrows you share; they are the ones who support one another and help one another to pay the *diyah* (blood money) if need be. It is the best and most proper of righteousness to take care of kinsfolk by spending on them and speaking kindly to them, according to how closely they are related and the extent of their need.

﴿orphans﴾ who have no breadwinner and do not have the strength to be independent of means. This highlights to us Allah's mercy towards His slaves, and shows us that He is more merciful to them than a father to his child, because Allah has enjoined His slaves, and made it obligatory for them, to spend some of their wealth on those who have lost their parents, so that they be equal to those who have not lost their parents. Moreover, as the reward matches the nature of the deed, whoever shows mercy towards the orphans of another, mercy will be shown to his orphan (if he dies).

﴿the needy﴾ this refers to those whose are subdued by need and humiliated by poverty. They have rights over the rich, so as to ward off or reduce their need; hence the rich should give as much as they can afford.

﴿wayfarers﴾ the wayfarer is the stranger who is cut off in a foreign land. Allah encourages His slaves to give him some of their wealth in order to help him on his journey, because he is most likely in need of help and has a great deal of expenses. Hence the one on whom Allah has bestowed the blessings of living comfortably in his homeland and so on should show compassion towards his brother who is a stranger, and help him in whatever way he can, even if that is by giving him food or a means of transportation, or protecting him from any wrongdoing that may befall him, and so on.

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﴿and those who ask﴾. They are the ones who are faced with some troubles or desperate need which dictate that they should go and ask for help, such as one who has to pay for damage caused accidentally or has to pay a tax that has been imposed by the authorities. This also applies to one who asks people for donations for the maintenance of public utilities, such as mosques, schools, bridges and the like; such a person has the right to ask even if he is rich.

﴿and for the ransom of slaves﴾ this includes manumission and helping others with it; giving money to a *mukâtib* (slave with a contract of manumission) so that he can pay off his master; ransoming captive Muslims from the disbelievers; and paying ransoms in the case of those who are being held by evildoers.

﴿to establish prayer and give zakâh﴾. We have seen above that Allah (ﷻ) often mentions prayer and zakâh together because they are the best acts of worship, for they are spiritual, physical and financial. By means of them a person's faith and certainty may be evaluated.

﴿to fulfil the covenants you make﴾. A covenant means fulfilling that which Allah has made binding or that which one has made binding upon oneself. That includes all the rights of Allah, which Allah has enjoined upon His slaves so that they have become binding and form part of the covenant, hence they are obliged to fulfil them. It also includes the rights of other people that Allah has enjoined upon them, and the obligations that an individual takes upon himself, such as oaths, vows and so on.

﴿to be patient in the face of hardship﴾ that is, poverty, because the poor man needs patience in many ways, as he is going through ongoing psychological distress and physical pain that no one else is going through. When he sees rich people enjoying that which is beyond his means, he feels distress. When he or his dependents go hungry, he feels distress. If he eats food that does not suit him (because he cannot afford anything else), he feels distress. If he goes naked or almost naked, he feels distress. When he thinks of his current

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situation and what he expects to face in the future, he feels distress. When faced with cold that he cannot ward off, he feels distress. All of these and similar calamities he is enjoined to face with patience, seeking reward with Allah and hoping for it.

﴿and adversity﴾ – this refers to sickness of all types, including fever, injuries, stomach ailments and pain in any part of the body, even toothache or aching fingers and so on. He needs to have patience in facing all of these things, because he feels weak and helpless and is suffering physical pain that is very difficult to bear, especially when it goes on for a long time. So he is enjoined to be patient and to seek reward with Allah (ﷻ).

﴿and in times of conflict﴾ that is, times of fighting enemies whom we are enjoined to fight, because engaging in physical fighting is very difficult, and a person may fear being killed, injured or captured. So in this situation he needs to be patient and seek reward with Allah, hoping for reward from Allah, from Whom come the help and victory that He has promised to those who are patient.

﴿Such﴾ that is, those who have the characteristics mentioned above, such as correct belief, and good deeds that are the result and proof of faith, and good manners that reflect the dignity of the individual and the essence of true humanity – such people are ﴿the true believers﴾ who are sincere in their faith because their deeds are a confirmation of that faith.

﴿and such are the pious﴾ because they have given up what is forbidden and have done what is enjoined, and these qualities inevitably include all good characteristics; fulfilling covenants includes all Islamic teachings. The acts of worship mentioned in this verse are the greatest acts of worship, and the one who does them is more likely to do others. Such are the righteous people who are sincere and pious.

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We know what Allah has connected to these matters of reward in this world and in the hereafter, but this is not the place to discuss that in detail.

 

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ كُتِبَ عَلَيۡكُمُ ٱلۡقِصَاصُ فِي ٱلۡقَتۡلَىۖ ٱلۡحُرُّ بِٱلۡحُرِّ وَٱلۡعَبۡدُ بِٱلۡعَبۡدِ وَٱلۡأُنثَىٰ بِٱلۡأُنثَىٰۚ فَمَنۡ عُفِيَ لَهُۥ مِنۡ أَخِيهِ شَيۡءٞ فَٱتِّبَاعُۢ بِٱلۡمَعۡرُوفِ وَأَدَآءٌ إِلَيۡهِ بِإِحۡسَٰنٖۗ ذَٰلِكَ تَخۡفِيفٞ مِّن رَّبِّكُمۡ وَرَحۡمَةٞۗ فَمَنِ ٱعۡتَدَىٰ بَعۡدَ ذَٰلِكَ فَلَهُۥ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٞ ١٧٨ وَلَكُمۡ فِي ٱلۡقِصَاصِ حَيَوٰةٞ يَٰٓأُوْلِي ٱلۡأَلۡبَٰبِ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَتَّقُونَ ١٧٩ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٧٨-١٧٩)

2:178. O you who believe, legal retribution is prescribed for you in cases of murder: the free for the free, the slave for the slave, the woman for the woman. But if any remission is made by the victim's next of kin, then blood money should be claimed in a reasonable manner and paid with goodwill. This is a concession and a mercy from your Lord. Whoever transgresses after that will have a painful punishment.

2:179. In this legal retribution there is [saving of] life for you, O people of understanding, so that you may become pious.

Here Allah (ﷻ) reminds His believing slaves of His favour to them in prescribing ﴿legal retribution... in cases of murder﴾, which means equity: the murderer is to be killed in the same manner as that in which he killed his victim, so as to establish justice and fairness among people.

This verse is addressed to the believers in general, which indicates that it is obligatory upon all of them, even the killer's next of kin, and even the killer himself, to help the victim's next of kin if he demands legal retribution. They should hand over the killer, and it is not permissible for them to try to prevent this ḥadd punishment or

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to prevent the victim's next of kin from exacting legal retribution, as was customary during the jâhiliyah and is still the case in similar environments, where protection is given to the offender.

Then this matter is explained further:
﴿the free for the free﴾ this includes a male for a male.
﴿the woman for the woman﴾ this also includes a female for a male, or a male for a female, because the Sunnah indicates that a male may be killed for a female. Excluded from this general meaning are cases involving parents, grandparents and so on; they are not to be killed for killing their child, because there are reports of the Sunnah to that effect. Furthermore, the phrase ﴿legal retribution﴾ indicates that it is not just to kill a parent for killing his child, and the compassion and mercy in the parent's heart prevent him from killing his own child except in cases of mental illness or severe harm caused to him by the child.

Also excluded from the general meaning of this verse is the disbeliever, according to the Sunnah, in addition to the fact that the verse is addressed to believers only. Moreover, it is not justice to kill a friend of Allah (a Muslim) for killing an enemy of Allah (a disbeliever).

﴿the slave for the slave﴾, whether male or female, and whether they are equal in value or not.

This also indicates that a free man cannot be killed for a slave, because they are not equal. From the phrase ﴿the woman for the woman﴾, some of the scholars understood that it is not permissible to kill a man for a woman; we have discussed this matter above.

This verse indicates that the basic principle is that legal retribution for killing is a must, and that the blood money (diyah) is an alternative to it. Hence Allah says: ﴿But if any remission is made by the victim's next of kin﴾ that is, if the victim's next of kin lets the killer off (and does not demand that he be killed), and decides to accept the blood

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money instead, or if some of the next of kin let him off, then legal retribution is waived, and the blood money becomes obligatory. The choice regarding the blood money is given to the next of kin. If he decides to let the killer off, it is obligatory for the victim's next of kin to claim the blood money ﴿in a reasonable manner﴾, without making things difficult for him or demanding more than he can bear; rather he should be gentle in asking and not put undue pressure on him.

﴿and paid with goodwill﴾ that is, the killer should pay it without delay or shortfall, and without mistreating the victim's next of kin in word or deed; should the response to the next of kin's kindness in letting him off be anything but paying off with goodwill? This is applicable in all cases where there are similar issues between people: the one who is owed money must make his claim in a reasonable manner, and the one who owes it must pay it with goodwill.

The words ﴿But if any remission is made by the victim's next of kin﴾ are aimed at softening people's hearts and encouraging them to let the killer off and accept the blood money instead. Even better than that is to let him off altogether (by not demanding the blood money either). The word ﴿next of kin﴾ (literally, brother) indicates that the killer does not become a disbeliever by his actions, because what is meant by brotherhood here is brotherhood in faith. The killer is not excluded from that by his action, so it is more apt to say that all sins apart from disbelief do not make the one who does them a disbeliever; rather his faith decreases as a result of that.

If the victim's next of kin, or some of them, pardon the killer, then the latter's blood is protected (that is, he is not to be killed); he is protected by Sharia from them and from others. Hence Allah says: ﴿Whoever transgresses after that﴾, after the killer has been pardoned, ﴿will have a painful punishment﴾ that is, in the hereafter. The issue of whether he is to be killed or not is based on the above, because he has killed someone who is equal to him, so he should be executed for that.

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According to those who interpreted the painful punishment as referring to execution (in the case of one who kills a killer who has been pardoned, as discussed above), this verse specifically indicates that he is to be killed and that it is not permissible to let him off. This is the view of some scholars, but the first view is the correct one, because his offence is no worse than that of anyone else.

Then Allah (ﷻ) explains the great wisdom behind the prescription of legal retribution:
﴿In this legal retribution there is [saving of] life﴾ that is, lives are protected and criminals will be deterred thereby, because anyone who realises that he will be killed if he kills another is very unlikely to kill. If the killer is seen executed, others will be deterred thereby, but if the punishment of the killer were something other than execution, there would be no deterrent to evil such as that which results from execution. The same may be said concerning all the ḥadd punishments prescribed in Sharia; they teach a lesson and provide a deterrent, which is indicative of the wisdom of the Most Wise, the Oft-Forgiving.

Because the wisdom behind this ruling is not properly understood except by people of reason and understanding, they alone are addressed here. This indicates that Allah (ﷻ) loves those of His slaves who use their minds and ponder the wisdom in His rulings and the purposes they serve, which is indicative of the perfection of His wisdom, His praise, His justice and His all-encompassing mercy. The one who meets this description is deserving of praise, because he is one of the people of understanding to whom this is addressed; that is sufficient honour for people who understand.

﴿so that you may become pious﴾. The one who knows his Lord and is aware of what there is in His religion and His law of great wisdom and clear signs is obliged thereby to submit to the command of Allah and be concerned about disobeying Him, so that he refrains from doing so. Thus he will deserve to be one of the pious.

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﴿ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ ٱلْمَوْتُ إِن تَرَكَ خَيْرًا ٱلْوَصِيَّةُ لِلْوَٰلِدَيْنِ وَٱلْأَقْرَبِينَ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ ۖ حَقًّا عَلَى ٱلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٨٠﴾ فَمَنۢ بَدَّلَهُۥ بَعْدَمَا سَمِعَهُۥ فَإِنَّمَآ إِثْمُهُۥ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ يُبَدِّلُونَهُۥٓ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٨١﴾ فَمَنْ خَافَ مِن مُّوصٍ جَنَفًا أَوْ إِثْمًا فَأَصْلَحَ بَيْنَهُمْ فَلَآ إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٨٢﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٨٠-١٨٢)

2:180. It is prescribed, when death approaches any of you, if he is leaving behind any wealth, that he should make a bequest to parents and next of kin on an equitable basis; this is a duty for those who fear Allah.

2:181. If anyone changes the bequest after hearing it, the guilt will be on those who make the change, for Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

2:182. But if anyone fears partiality or wrongdoing on the part of the testator, and sets things right between [the parties concerned], there is no sin on him, for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

That is: Allah has enjoined upon you, O believers, ﴿when death approaches any of you﴾ that is, when any of the causes of death are present, such as an illness that is expected to be terminal and so on ﴿if he is leaving behind any wealth﴾. This refers to whatever is regarded as a loss of wealth according to custom. In that case he should make a bequest to his parents and the people who are the closest to him on an equitable basis, according to his situation, without being extravagant and without giving only to distant relatives to the exclusion of close relatives. Rather he should give according to the degree of closeness and the extent of need.

﴿this is a duty for those who fear Allah﴾. This indicates that doing this is obligatory, because the right is established and Allah has made it one of the obligations connected to piety or fearing Allah.

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It should be noted that the majority of commentators think that this verse was abrogated by the verse which speaks of the shares of inheritance; others think that it applies to parents and relatives other than heirs, even though there is nothing to indicate that it applies specifically to them. It is best to say that this is a bequest to parents and relatives in general terms, and Allah (ﷻ) has left the details to be determined according to custom.

Later on, Allah (ﷻ) decreed what is meant by ﴿on an equitable basis﴾ with regard to parents and other relatives who are designated heirs, in the verses that speak of the shares of inheritance. This came after the matter had been mentioned in general terms. The ruling (in this verse) concerning parents who do not inherit and other relatives who are blocked by a person or because of their degree of kinship, remained in effect, because the dying person is enjoined to make a bequest to these people, who are the most deserving of his kindness. This view is agreed upon by the Ummah, hence based on the above we can reconcile between the two views concerning this verse.

Whenever it is possible to reconcile between two views, it is better to do so than to say that one of them is abrogated when there is no sound evidence to that effect.

Because the testator may refrain from making a bequest because he thinks that those who come after him will change his bequest, Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿If anyone changes the bequest﴾ that is, a bequest made to those mentioned in this verse or others

﴿after hearing it﴾ that is, after understanding it and knowing how it should be carried out

﴿the guilt will be on those who make the change﴾. The testator will have his reward with Allah, and the guilt or sin will be on the one who changed it.

﴿for Allah is All-Hearing﴾ and hears all voices; He knows what the testator says and what his bequest is, so he should be careful and be

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aware of the One Who hears him and sees him, and he should not be unjust in his bequest

﴿All-Knowing﴾ and knows his intention; He knows what the beneficiary of the bequest will do. So the testator should try his best to do what is right, and Allah will know that from his intention and will reward him even if he makes a mistake. This is also a warning to the beneficiary against altering the bequest, for Allah knows and can see what he is doing; so he should fear Allah. This is the ruling on bequests that are fair. As for bequests that include unfairness and wrongdoing, those who are present at the time when the bequest is made should advise the testator to do that which is better and more appropriate; they should tell him not to be unfair. The word translated here as ﴿partiality﴾ refers to being unfair without realising it, and the word translated as ﴿wrongdoing﴾ refers to deliberate unfairness.

If he does not do that, then things should be put right among the beneficiaries of his bequest, trying to reach a fair solution among them on the basis of mutual consent and reconciliation. They should be exhorted to absolve their deceased loved one of any blame. The one who does that has done a great good deed and there is no sin on him, unlike the one who changes a permissible bequest. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿for Allah is Oft-Forgiving﴾ that is, He forgives all errors and their consequences to those who repent to Him; that includes His forgiveness of the one who showed selflessness and gave up some of his rights to his brother, because whoever is easy-going, Allah will be easy-going with him, and He will forgive their deceased loved one who was unfair in his bequest, if they seek reward with Allah for being easy-going with one another in order to absolve the deceased of any blame. Allah is Most Merciful to His slaves, as He has prescribed that they should be compassionate with one another in all their affairs. These verses indicate that it is encouraged to make a bequest and to make clear who the beneficiaries are. There is also a warning addressed to the one who changes a fair bequest, and encouragement to put things straight with regard to unfair bequests.

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﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ كُتِبَ عَلَيۡكُمُ ٱلصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبۡلِكُمۡ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾ أَيَّامٗا مَّعۡدُودَٰتٖۚ فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا أَوۡ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٖ فَعِدَّةٞ مِّنۡ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَۚ وَعَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُۥ فِدۡيَةٞ طَعَامُ مِسۡكِينٖۖ فَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيۡرٗا فَهُوَ خَيۡرٞ لَّهُۥۚ وَأَن تَصُومُواْ خَيۡرٞ لَّكُمۡ إِن كُنتُمۡ تَعۡلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٤﴾ شَهۡرُ رَمَضَانَ ٱلَّذِيٓ أُنزِلَ فِيهِ ٱلۡقُرۡءَانُ هُدٗى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَٰتٖ مِّنَ ٱلۡهُدَىٰ وَٱلۡفُرۡقَانِۚ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنكُمُ ٱلشَّهۡرَ فَلۡيَصُمۡهُۖ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوۡ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٖ فَعِدَّةٞ مِّنۡ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَۗ يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ بِكُمُ ٱلۡيُسۡرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ ٱلۡعُسۡرَ وَلِتُكۡمِلُواْ ٱلۡعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُواْ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَىٰكُمۡ وَلَعَلَّكُمۡ تَشۡكُرُونَ ﴿١٨٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٨٣-١٨٥)

2:183. O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those who came before you, that you may become pious.

2:184. [Fasting] for a specific number of days; but if any of you is ill, or on a journey, he should fast the same number of other days. For those who can fast only with extreme difficulty, there is a way to compensate, which is to feed a needy person [for each day]. But whoever gives more than that, of his own accord, that is better for him. And it is better for you to fast, if only you knew.

2:185. Ramadan is the month in which the Qur'an was sent down, as guidance for humankind, and as clear signs that show the right way and distinguish between right and wrong. So every one of you who is present [at his home] during that month should spend it in fasting, but if anyone is ill, or on a journey, he should fast the same number of other days. Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you. [He wants you] to complete the prescribed number of days, and to glorify Him for His having guided you, and so that you may be grateful to Him.

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Here Allah tells us of the blessings that He has bestowed upon His slaves by enjoining them to fast as He enjoined it upon previous nations, because it is one of the laws and commands that are in the best interests of people in all times.

This verse also offers encouragement to this Ummah, that they should compete with others in striving to do perfect deeds and hastening to acquire righteous qualities; this is not something too burdensome which they have been singled out to do.

Then Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the wisdom behind the prescription of fasting, as He says ﴿that you may become pious﴾. Fasting is one of the greatest means of developing piety, because it involves obeying the command of Allah and avoiding that which He has forbidden.

Part of the piety that fasting involves is that the fasting person refrains from that which Allah has forbidden to him of food, drink, intercourse and so on, to which he is naturally inclined, seeking thereby to draw closer to Allah, hoping for His reward by giving up these things. This is part of piety. Piety also includes the following:

- The fasting person trains himself to remember that Allah (ﷻ) is always watching, so he gives up things that he desires even though they may be available to him, because he knows that Allah is watching him.
- Fasting narrows the pathways of the Shaytân, who flows through the son of Adam like blood. Fasting weakens the Shaytân's influence and reduces sins.
- The fasting person usually does many acts of worship and obedience, which are characteristics of piety.
- By fasting, the rich man feels the pain of hunger, which makes him inclined to help the poor and destitute. This is also a characteristic of piety.

After stating that He has enjoined fasting upon them, Allah then tells them that it is for a specific number of days; that is, it is only for a few days, so it is very easy.

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Then another concession is granted: ﴿but if any of you is ill, or on a journey, he should fast the same number of other days﴾. That is because in most cases these things entail hardship, so Allah has granted a concession allowing these people to break the fast.

Because it is essential that every believer should attain the benefits of fasting, Allah instructed them to make up the fast on other days, when the sickness is over and the journey has ended, and one is at ease again.

﴿the same number of other days﴾ indicates that he should make up the number of days missed in Ramadan, whether it is the whole month or less, and it is permissible to fast on short, cool days to make up for long, hot days, and vice versa.

﴿For those who can fast only with extreme difficulty﴾ that is, they are able to fast, but with difficulty
﴿there is a way to compensate﴾ for each day they did not fast
﴿which is to feed a needy person [for each day]﴾. This was the ruling at the beginning, when fasting was first enjoined and they were not used to it. As it was difficult for them, Allah the Most Wise introduced it gradually in the easiest manner, giving those who found it too difficult the choice between fasting – which was preferable – or feeding the needy instead. Hence He said: ﴿And it is better for you to fast, if only you knew﴾.

Then after that fasting was made binding upon everyone who is able to do it; those who are not able to do it may break the fast and make up the same number of other days.

It was also stated that the phrase ﴿For those who can fast only with extreme difficulty﴾ refers to those who found it burdensome and unbearably difficult, such as the elderly; they could compensate by feeding one poor person for each day they did not fast. This is the correct view.

﴿Ramadan is the month in which the Qur'an was sent down﴾ that is, the fast that you are enjoined to observe is the month of Ramadan,

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the great month in which Allah bestowed the great blessing upon you, namely the Holy Qur'an, which contains guidance to that which is in your best interests in both religious and worldly affairs, explains the truth in the clearest manner, and distinguishes between truth and falsehood, guidance and misguidance, those who are destined for paradise and those who are destined for hell. So it should come as no surprise that a month of such blessings that Allah bestowed upon you should be a season of worship in which fasting is enjoined.

Having confirmed that and highlighted its blessings, and the reason why it is deemed so special, Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿So every one of you who is present [at his home] during that month should spend it in fasting﴾. This indicates that fasting is obligatory for everyone who is able, healthy and not travelling.

Because the choice between fasting or paying compensation had been abrogated, Allah reiterated the concession that is granted to those who are sick or travelling, lest anyone think that this concession had also been abrogated: ﴿Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you﴾. That is, Allah (ﷻ) wants to make the paths that lead to attaining His pleasure very easy for you. Hence everything that Allah has enjoined upon His slaves is very easy.

If something happens to make it difficult, then there is another option to make it easier, either by waiving the obligation or by reducing it in some way.

﴿[He wants you] to complete the prescribed number of days﴾. This – and Allah knows best – is so that no one will think that the purpose of fasting Ramadan may be achieved by fasting only part of it. This notion is dispelled by the command to complete the number of days and to give thanks to Allah (ﷻ) when completing it, for enabling His slaves to do it, making it easy for them and explaining it to them, and to magnify Allah (by saying *Allâhu akbar* – Allah is most great) at the end of the fast. That also includes magnifying Allah from the

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time when the new moon of Shawwâl is sighted until the end of the Eid *khuṭbah*.




﴿وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٨٦)

2:186. When My slaves ask you concerning Me, I am indeed close [to them]; I answer the call of the caller when he calls on Me. So let them respond to Me, and believe in Me, that they may be rightly guided.

This is the answer to a question. Some of his Companions asked the Prophet (ﷺ): O Messenger of Allah, is our Lord close to us so that we may whisper to Him or is He far away so that we should call out to Him? Then the words ﴿When My slaves ask you concerning Me, I am indeed close [to them]﴾ were revealed, because Allah (ﷻ) is Ever-Watchful, Witness (to everything); He can see what is secret and what is yet more hidden; He knows even the most stealthy glance of the eyes and all the secrets that hearts conceal. He is also close to the one who calls upon Him, in the sense that He is quick to respond. Hence He said: ﴿I answer the call of the caller when he calls on Me﴾.

Calling or supplication (*du'ā'*) is of two types: supplication of worship and supplication of asking. And Allah's closeness is of two types: closeness to all of His creation by His knowledge and closeness to those who worship Him and call upon Him by responding, helping and guiding.

Whoever calls upon his Lord with focus and presence of mind, offering supplication as prescribed in Islam, with no impediment to receiving a response to his supplication – such as consuming haram wealth or haram food, and so on – then Allah has promised to answer

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him, especially if he fulfils the conditions of supplication which are responding to Allah (ﷻ) by obeying His commands and heeding His prohibitions in word and deed, and having faith that makes a response inevitable. Hence He says: ﴿So let them respond to Me, and believe in Me, that they may be rightly guided﴾ that is, so that they will be guided to believe and do righteous deeds, which will rid them of errors that are contrary to faith and righteous deeds. Faith in Allah and responding to His commands are the means of attaining knowledge, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe. If you fear Allah, He will give you the insight to distinguish between right and wrong...﴾ *(al-Anfāl 8: 29)*




﴿أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ ٱلصِّيَامِ ٱلرَّفَثُ إِلَىٰ نِسَآئِكُمْ ۚ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَّهُنَّ ۗ عَلِمَ ٱللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنكُمْ ۖ فَٱلْـَٰٔنَ بَٰشِرُوهُنَّ وَٱبْتَغُوا۟ مَا كَتَبَ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۚ وَكُلُوا۟ وَٱشْرَبُوا۟ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ ٱلْخَيْطُ ٱلْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ ٱلْخَيْطِ ٱلْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ ٱلْفَجْرِ ۖ ثُمَّ أَتِمُّوا۟ ٱلصِّيَامَ إِلَى ٱلَّيْلِ ۚ وَلَا تُبَٰشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنتُمْ عَٰكِفُونَ فِى ٱلْمَسَٰجِدِ ۗ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ ٱللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرَبُوهَا ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٨٧)

2:187. It has been made lawful for you to go in unto your wives during the nights of the fast. They are a garment to you and you are a garment to them. Allah knows that you have been betraying yourselves, but He has accepted your repentance and forgiven you. So now go in unto them, and seek what Allah has ordained for you; and eat and drink, until the white thread of dawn appears to you distinct from its black thread. Then complete your fast until nightfall; but do not be intimate with your wives during the nights of your devotional retreat in the mosques. These are the limits [set by] Allah, so do not go near them. Thus Allah

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makes His commands clear to humankind, that they may become pious.

When the fast was first made obligatory, the Muslims were forbidden to eat, drink or have intercourse during the night after sleeping. This caused a great deal of hardship to some of them, so Allah (ﷻ) made it easier for them by permitting these actions – eating, drinking and intercourse – throughout the night of the fast, whether they had slept or not, because they had been betraying themselves by not being able to adhere to some of that which was enjoined upon them.

﴿but He has accepted your repentance﴾ by making something flexible for you which, if He did not do that, would lead to sin
﴿and forgiven you﴾ for your previous self-betrayal.
﴿So now﴾, after this concession and flexibility that have been granted by Allah
﴿go in unto them﴾ and be intimate with them in all ways
﴿and seek what Allah has ordained for you﴾ that is, by being intimate with your wives, you should have the intention of drawing closer to Allah and of fulfilling the greater purpose behind intercourse, which is to produce offspring, to keep yourselves and your spouses chaste, and to fulfil the purposes of marriage.

One of the things that Allah has ordained for you is *Laylat al-Qadr*, which comes during the nights of the Ramadan fast. So it is not appropriate for you to be distracted by this pleasure and thus miss out on Laylat al-Qadr, because you can catch up with physical pleasures later on, but if you miss out on Laylat al-Qadr, you cannot catch up with it later.

﴿and eat and drink, until the white thread of dawn appears to you distinct from its black thread﴾. This refers to the time when one should stop eating, drinking and having intercourse. It indicates that if a person is eating and so on, and is not sure whether dawn has come, there is no blame on him.

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It also indicates that it is recommended to have the pre-dawn meal (*suḥoor*), because it is prescribed; it is also recommended to delay it, based on the fact that Allah likes to make things easy for people.

This verse also indicates that it is permissible to be in a state of *janâbah* (impurity following sexual activity) when dawn comes, because if it is permissible to engage in intimacy until dawn breaks, then it is permissible for him to be in a state of janâbah if dawn comes before he has done *ghusl* (full ablution), and his fast is still valid.

﴿Then﴾ when dawn breaks ﴿complete your fast﴾ that is, refrain from everything that breaks the fast
﴿until nightfall﴾ which is sunset.

Although it is permissible to have intercourse during the nights of the fast, that does not apply to everyone. It is not permissible to the one who is observing i'tikâf (devotional retreat), because such persons were excluded by the phrase, ﴿but do not be intimate with your wives during the nights of your devotional retreat in the mosques﴾.

This verse indicates that it is prescribed to observe i'tikâf, which means staying in the mosque to devote oneself to worshipping Allah (ﷻ), and that i'tikâf is not valid anywhere except in a mosque.

We may conclude from this that the definition of a mosque is a mosque as it was known at that time, which is a mosque in which the five daily prayers are held.

It also indicates that intercourse is one of the things that invalidate i'tikâf.

﴿These﴾ that is, the things mentioned here – namely the prohibition of eating, drinking, intercourse and other things that invalidate the fast, and the prohibition on breaking the fast except for those who have excuses, the prohibition on intercourse for the one who is observing i'tikâf, and other things that are forbidden (whilst fasting) – ﴿are the limits [set by] Allah﴾, Who has set them for His slaves and forbidden them to them. He says: ﴿so do not go near them﴾, which is more

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emphatic than saying "do not do them", because the prohibition on going near them includes the prohibition on doing the forbidden action itself and the prohibition on the means that lead to it.

We are enjoined to refrain from things that are forbidden, and to keep away from them as much as possible, as well as avoiding everything that leads to them. With regard to commands, Allah says: ﴿These are the limits [set by] Allah, so do not go near them﴾. Thus it is forbidden to overstep those limits.

﴿Thus﴾ that is, Allah has clearly explained the rulings mentioned above to His slaves and has clarified them completely.

﴿Allah makes His commands clear to humankind, that they may become pious﴾. When the truth becomes clear to them, they will follow it, and when falsehood becomes clear to them, they will avoid it. A person may do something that is forbidden out of ignorance, not knowing that it is forbidden, and if he knew that it was forbidden, he would not have done it. So as Allah has explained His signs to people, there is no room for any excuse or argument. Hence this is a means of attaining piety.

 

﴿وَلَا تَأْكُلُوٓا۟ أَمْوَٰلَكُم بَيْنَكُم بِٱلْبَٰطِلِ وَتُدْلُوا۟ بِهَآ إِلَى ٱلْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا۟ فَرِيقًا مِّنْ أَمْوَٰلِ ٱلنَّاسِ بِٱلْإِثْمِ وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٨﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٨٨)

2:188. Do not devour one another's property by unjust means, nor use it to bribe judges, with the intention of wrongfully and knowingly devouring a part of [other] people's property.

That is, do not take one another's wealth, meaning the wealth of other people, and add it to your own, because the Muslim should love for his brother what he loves for himself, and respect his brother's

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property as he respects his own. Devouring the wealth of others also encourages others to do likewise if they have the power to do so.

Taking other people's wealth is of two types: lawful and unlawful. What is unlawful is taking it and devouring it by unjust means, which is what is referred to here.

That also includes taking wealth by force, stealing, betraying a trust, failing to pay back a loan, and so on, as well as taking it on the basis of a transaction involving haram dealings such as *ribâ* (usury) and all forms of gambling. All of these come under the heading of consuming wealth unlawfully, because it is not in exchange for something that is permissible. It also includes taking wealth by deceit when buying and selling, renting and the like; employing hired workers and not paying them; taking payment for work that was not done properly; taking payment for doing acts of worship, which is not valid, because these acts should be done only for the sake of Allah (ﷻ); taking from zakâh and charity money, or *awqâf* (Islamic endowments) and bequests, by one who has no right to do so, or taking more than one is entitled to.

All of these and similar actions that come under the heading of consuming wealth unlawfully are not permitted under any circumstances; even if a dispute arises and is referred to the shar'i judge, and the one who wants to consume wealth unlawfully gives stronger evidence than that presented by the one who is in the right, and the judge rules in his favour on that basis, the ruling of the judge does not make permissible what is forbidden. Rather the judge rules on the basis of what he hears, but matters remain as they are and cannot be changed by the ruling of a judge. The verdict of the judge should not give the wrongdoer a sense of having got off scot free.

If a person presents false evidence to the judge and gets a verdict in his favour by means of that, that does not make it permissible for him, and he will be knowingly consuming the wealth of others unlawfully and sinfully. Therefore his punishment will be more severe. On that

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basis, if a lawyer knows that his defendant's claim is wrong, it is not permissible for him to defend the wrongdoer, as Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿...do not be an advocate for the deceitful.﴾ *(an-Nisâ' 4: 105)*




﴿ يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلْأَهِلَّةِ ۖ قُلْ هِىَ مَوَٰقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَٱلْحَجِّ ۗ وَلَيْسَ ٱلْبِرُّ بِأَن تَأْتُوا۟ ٱلْبُيُوتَ مِن ظُهُورِهَا وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱلْبِرَّ مَنِ ٱتَّقَىٰ ۗ وَأْتُوا۟ ٱلْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَٰبِهَا ۚ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٨٩﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٨٩)

2:189. They ask you about the phases of the moon. Say: They are a means of determining time for the [organisation of] human affairs and for Hajj. It is not righteousness to enter your houses from the rear; rather righteousness is to fear Allah. So enter houses through their doors, and fear Allah so that you may prosper.

﴿They ask you about the phases of the moon﴾: what is the wisdom behind them? Or they ask about the moon phases themselves. ﴿Say: They are a means of determining time for the [organisation of] human affairs﴾. By His grace and mercy, Allah (ﷻ) has caused them to change in this manner. The moon appears weak at the beginning of the month, then it gradually increases until halfway through the month, then it begins to decrease until the end of the month. This is so that the people will know thereby times for their acts of worship, such as fasting, as well as the times for paying zakâh and offering expiation, and the time of Hajj.

Because Hajj takes place during certain well-known months and takes a long time, Allah says ﴿and for Hajj﴾. From the phases of the moon people also know the times for paying off deferred debts, rental periods, the length of the *'iddah* and pregnancy, and other matters that

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have to do with people's affairs. Allah has made it a means of working out times that is available to everyone, young and old, knowledgeable and ignorant. If times were calculated according to the solar calendar, no one would know it except very few people.

﴿It is not righteousness to enter your houses from the rear﴾. In the past, when the Anṣâr and others among the Arabs entered *iḥrâm*, they would not enter houses through their doors, thinking that this action was a kind of worship and righteousness. So Allah told them that it was not righteousness, because Allah (ﷻ) had not prescribed it for them; any person who does an act of worship that was not prescribed by Allah or His Messenger (ﷺ) is worshipping on the basis of innovation (bid'ah). He commanded them to enter houses through their doors, because that is easier for them, and one of the aims of Sharia is to make things easier for people.

From this verse we learn that in every situation one should approach the matter in the easiest manner that Allah has made the means of doing it. So the one who wants to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil should look at the character of a person and his situation, and use gentleness and tact, by means of which his intended goal will be met, completely or partially. Both student and teacher should follow the easiest way of reaching the (educational) goal. The same applies to everyone who tries to do something: if he approaches it in the proper manner and persists in it, he will inevitably reach his goal with the help of Allah.

﴿and fear Allah﴾. This is the righteousness that Allah enjoins: that is, adhering to piety all the time, obeying His commands and heeding His prohibitions. This is the means of success, which is attaining one's goal and saving oneself from what one is afraid of. The one who does not fear Allah (ﷻ) will have no way of attaining success, whereas the one who does fear Him will attain success.

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﴿ وَقَٰتِلُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقَٰتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوٓا۟ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿١٩٠﴾ وَٱقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُم مِّنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ ۚ وَٱلْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ ٱلْقَتْلِ ۚ وَلَا تُقَٰتِلُوهُمْ عِندَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ حَتَّىٰ يُقَٰتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ ۖ فَإِن قَٰتَلُوكُمْ فَٱقْتُلُوهُمْ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ جَزَآءُ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿١٩١﴾ فَإِنِ ٱنتَهَوْا۟ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٩٢﴾ وَقَٰتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ ٱلدِّينُ لِلَّهِ ۖ فَإِنِ ٱنتَهَوْا۟ فَلَا عُدْوَٰنَ إِلَّا عَلَى ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿١٩٣﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٩٠-١٩٣)

2:190. Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not overstep the limits, for Allah does not love those who overstep the limits.

2:191. And slay them wherever you find them, and drive them out from where they have driven you out, for persecution is worse than slaughter; but do not fight them in the Sacred Mosque, unless they [first] fight you there; but if they fight you, then slay them. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers.

2:192. But if they desist, then Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

2:193. Fight them until there is no more worshipping of others along with Allah, and all worship becomes devoted to Allah alone; but if they desist, let there be no more hostility except towards wrongdoers.

These verses include the command to fight for the sake of Allah. This came after the migration to Madinah, when the Muslims had become strong enough to fight. Allah instructed them to fight after they had been instructed to refrain. The stipulation that fighting should only be ﴿in the cause of Allah﴾ is encouragement to make it sincerely for Him alone; this also implies prohibition on getting involved in fighting during turmoil in which Muslims kill other Muslims.

﴿those who fight you﴾ that is, those who are prepared to fight you. This refers to adult men, not old men who have no contribution to

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make to fighting, whether by offering opinions or joining the physical fight.

The prohibition on overstepping the limits applies to all such acts, such as killing non-combatants like women, the insane, children, monks and the like; mutilating the bodies of the slain; or killing animals and cutting down trees, and other acts that bring no benefit to the Muslims.

Another kind of overstepping the limits is fighting those from whom *jizyah* may be accepted if they agree to give it. That is not permissible.

﴿And slay them wherever you find them﴾. This is a command to fight them wherever they are found, at all times, whether defending or attacking.

Then an exception is made to this general command to fight them: ﴿but do not fight them in the Sacred Mosque﴾. That is not permissible unless they are the ones who initiate the fighting there, in which case they are to be fought in requital of their aggression.

This is ongoing at all times, until they give up their disbelief and become Muslim. Then Allah will accept their repentance, no matter what they did (in the past) of disbelieving in Allah and worshipping others alongside Him in the Sacred Mosque and preventing the Messengers and the believers from reaching it. This is out of His mercy and kindness towards His slaves.

Because fighting in the Sacred Mosque may make people think that this is mischief in this holy city, Allah tells us that the mischief in that place caused by associating others with Allah and persecuting the Muslims is worse than the mischief of slaughter, so there is no sin on you – O Muslims – for fighting them.

From this verse is derived the well-known principle of committing the lesser of two evils in order to ward off the greater.

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Then Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the purpose behind fighting for His cause. The aim is not to shed the blood of the disbelievers and take their wealth; rather the aim is so that ﴿all worship becomes devoted to Allah alone﴾, in order that the religion of Allah (ﷻ) may prevail over all other religions, and to ward off everything that is opposed to it, such as polytheism and so on. If this aim is achieved, then there is to be no killing or fighting.

﴿but if they desist﴾ and stop fighting you in the Sacred Mosque, ﴿let there be no more hostility except towards wrongdoers﴾ that is, there should be no aggression on your part towards them, except in the case of wrongdoers among them, who deserve punishment according to their wrongdoing.

 

﴿الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْحُرُمَاتُ قِصَاصٌ ۚ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٩٤﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٩٤)

2:194. A sacred month for a sacred month: violation of any sanctity calls for fair retribution. So if anyone transgresses against you, then attack him as he attacked you. But fear Allah, and know that Allah is with those who fear Him.

The words ﴿A sacred month for a sacred month﴾ may be interpreted as referring to what the polytheists did of preventing the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions from entering Makkah in the year of al-Ḥudaybiyah, and agreeing that they could enter it (and make up the missed 'umrah) the following year. Both incidents – preventing the Muslims from entering Makkah, and their making up the missed 'umrah – occurred in a sacred month, namely Dhul-Qa'dah, so the one made up for the other. This offered consolation to the Companions by allowing them to complete their rituals (of 'umrah). It may also

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mean: if you fight them in the sacred month, but they are the ones who started the fight and were the aggressors, then you are not to be blamed for fighting back.

According to this understanding, the words ﴿violation of any sanctity calls for fair retribution﴾ come under the heading of stating a general principle after a specific one. In other words, with regard to everything that is to be venerated, whether it is a sacred month, a sacred land, being in the state of iḥrâm or anything more general than that, everything that Sharia enjoins us to venerate, if anyone transgresses against it, then there should be retribution against him. The one who fights during the sacred month is to be fought; the one who violates the sacred city should be subjected to the ḥadd punishment and has no protection in the sacred place; the one who kills his peer is to be killed in return; the one who wounds another or severs his limb is to be subjected to legal retribution; the one who takes the wealth of another unlawfully should have an equivalent amount taken from him.

But can the one who is in the right take as much as he is entitled to, or not? There is a difference of scholarly opinion concerning this matter; the correct view is that if the reason for him having this right is obvious, such as a guest who is not offered hospitality, or when a man refuses to spend on a wife or relative on whom one is obliged to spend. In such cases it is permissible to take one's right from that person's wealth. But if the reason is not obvious, such as one who denied a debt that he owed to another, or betrayed a trust that he was given, or he stole something, and so on, in such cases it is not permissible for him to take compensation from (the wrongdoer's) wealth, so as to reconcile between the evidence. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says, emphasising the above: ﴿So if anyone transgresses against you, then attack him as he attacked you﴾. This explains how to settle scores, namely like for like.

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Because in most cases people would not stop at the limits when granted a concession allowing retaliation, since people want that satisfaction, Allah (ﷻ) enjoined them to always fear Him, which means heeding His limits and not overstepping them. Allah tells us that He is ﴿with those who fear Him﴾, and He will help them, support them and guide them.

If Allah is with a person, he will attain eternal happiness. But if a person does not adhere to piety and fear Allah, He will forsake him and not protect him; He will leave him to his own devices and thus his doom will be closer to him than his jugular vein.




﴿وَأَنفِقُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا۟ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى ٱلتَّهْلُكَةِ ۛ وَأَحْسِنُوٓا۟ ۛ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٩٥﴾﴾

(سورة البقرة: ١٩٥)

2:195. And spend in the cause of Allah, and do not contribute to your destruction with your own hands; but do good, for Allah loves those who do good.

Here Allah (ﷻ) commands His slaves to spend for His sake, which means giving wealth in ways that bring one closer to Allah. These are all good ways, such as giving charity to one who is needy or to a relative, or spending on dependents on whom one is obliged to spend.

More important, and first and foremost, is spending on jihad for the sake of Allah. Spending on it is itself jihad with one's wealth; it is obligatory just as physical jihad is, and it serves great purposes such as helping to strengthen the Muslims and weaken polytheism and its followers, and helping to establish and support the religion of Allah. Jihad for the sake of Allah cannot be done except by spending; spending for jihad is like the soul for the body; it cannot exist without it. Failing to spend for the sake of Allah undermines jihad and gives

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power and strength to the enemy. So the words ﴿and do not contribute to your destruction with your own hands﴾ serve as a reason why one should spend on jihad.

Contributing to your destruction with your own hands refers to two things: not doing what is enjoined, which inevitably leads to ruin in both physical and spiritual terms, and doing that which leads to self-destruction, which includes many things such as: not engaging in jihad for the sake of Allah or spending on it, which inevitably leads to the enemy gaining power over the Muslims; taking unnecessary risks when fighting, or travelling in dangerous places where there are wild animals or snakes; climbing trees or dangerous structures; walking underneath something that poses a danger, and so on. Such things all come under the heading of contributing to your destruction with your own hands.

Other kinds of contributing to your destruction with your own hands include: persisting in disobedience and sin; despairing of ever repenting; failing to do obligatory duties that Allah has enjoined, failure to do which leads to ruin in spiritual and physical terms.

Because spending for the sake of Allah is a kind of good deed, Allah enjoins doing good in general terms: ﴿but do good, for Allah loves those who do good﴾. That includes all kinds of doing good, because it is not limited to any particular thing. That also includes doing good with one's wealth, as stated above.

It also includes being kind to people by: using one's position to help, interceding and so on; enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil; teaching beneficial knowledge; meeting people's needs by relieving their distress, helping at times of hardship, visiting the sick, attending their funerals, guiding those who have gone astray, helping people with their work, doing things for those who cannot do them themselves, and other things that come under the heading of kindness as enjoined by Allah. Kindness also includes worshipping Allah (ﷻ) properly, which is as the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

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«You should worship Allah as if you can see Him, and if you cannot see Him, He sees you.» (Muslim)

Whoever has these characteristics is one of those of whom Allah says:

﴿For those who do good there will be the best reward and more besides...﴾ *(Yoonus 10: 26)*

Allah will be with such a one, guiding him and helping him in all his affairs.

Having mentioned the rulings on fasting and jihad, Allah now speaks of the rulings on Hajj:




﴿ وَأَتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ وَلَا تَحْلِقُوا رُءُوسَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ الْهَدْيُ مَحِلَّهُ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضًا أَوْ بِهِ أَذًى مِنْ رَأْسِهِ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِنْ صِيَامٍ أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَمَنْ تَمَتَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ فِي الْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ تِلْكَ عَشَرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلُهُ حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١٩٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٩٦)

2:196. And perform properly the Hajj and 'umrah for Allah. But if you are prevented [from completing it], send an offering for sacrifice, such as you can obtain easily, and do not shave your heads until the offering reaches the place of sacrifice. And if any of you is ill, or has an ailment of the scalp [necessitating shaving the head whilst still in ihrâm], he must compensate by either fasting, giving charity, or offering a sacrifice. And when you are safe [from the enemy], if any one wishes to take a break between 'umrah and Hajj, he must offer a sacrifice, such as he can obtain easily, but if he cannot afford it, he should fast three days during the Hajj and seven days upon his return, making

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ten days in all. This is for the one whose family is not present at the Sacred Mosque [that is, not residing in Makkah]. And fear Allah, and know that Allah is severe in punishment.

The words ﴿And perform properly the Hajj and 'umrah for Allah﴾ are indicative of a number of things:

1- That Hajj and 'umrah are obligatory.
2- That it is obligatory to do them properly, with all the essential and obligatory parts, as indicated by the actions of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his words:
«Learn from me your rituals (of Hajj).» (Muslim)
3- In these words is evidence for those who say that 'umrah is obligatory.
4- That it is obligatory to complete Hajj and 'umrah once one has started them, even if they are supererogatory (*nafl*).
5- The command to do them properly means putting more effort into doing what must be done.
6- That they should be done sincerely for the sake of Allah alone.
7- The one who enters iḥrâm for them does not exit iḥrâm at all until he has completed them, except in cases where Allah has made an exception, which is being prevented from completing them. Hence Allah says:

﴿But if you are prevented [from completing it]﴾ that is, if you are prevented from reaching the Kaaba to complete Hajj and 'umrah because of sickness, losing your way, (obstruction by) an enemy, and other things that may prevent one from continuing.
﴿Send an offering for sacrifice, such as you can obtain easily﴾ that is, slaughter whatever sacrificial animal you can obtain easily. This refers to one seventh of a camel, one seventh of a cow, or a sheep to be sacrificed by the one who has been prevented from completing (Hajj or 'umrah), who should then shave his head and exit iḥrâm because of having been prevented from continuing. This is what was

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done by the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions when the polytheists prevented them from reaching Makkah in the year of al-Ḥudaybiyah. If no sacrificial animal is available, then he should fast ten days, as in the case of one who is doing Hajj *tamattu'*,[15] then exit iḥrâm.

﴿and do not shave your heads until the offering reaches the place of sacrifice﴾. This is one of the things that are forbidden during iḥrâm: removing hair from the head or body by shaving or otherwise. The purpose behind that is to be unkempt and to prevent the pleasure of removing it.

Many scholars drew an analogy between removing the hair and clipping the nails, as both are a kind of comfort. The prohibition mentioned continues until the offering or sacrificial animal reaches the place of sacrifice, on the Day of Sacrifice. It is preferable to shave the head after offering the sacrifice, as is indicated by this verse.

This verse also indicates that if the one who is doing Hajj tamattu' has brought his sacrificial animal with him, he should not exit iḥrâm from his 'umrah before the Day of Sacrifice. When he has performed the ṭawâf (circumambulation of the Kaaba) and sa'iy (going between Ṣafâ and Marwah) for 'umrah, he should then enter iḥrâm for Hajj, and he cannot exit iḥrâm because he has brought the sacrificial animal with him. Rather Allah (ﷻ) has forbidden that to him because that is showing humility and submission to Allah, a kind of humility that is in the best interests of the individual, and there is no harm in it. If any harm does occur, such as if he is sick and will benefit from shaving his head, or he has an injury or lice and so on (and will benefit from shaving his head), then it is permissible for him to do so, but he must offer compensation for that ﴿by either fasting﴾ for three days, ﴿giving charity﴾ to six poor persons, ﴿or offering a sacrifice﴾ of an animal that is valid as an *uḍḥiyah* sacrifice. He has the choice between these options; the best is to offer a sacrifice, then to give charity, then to fast.

[15] Tamattu' (Hajj): Hajj plus 'umrah, the pilgrim enters iḥrâm for 'umrah, performs 'umrah, exits iḥrâm, then enters iḥrâm again for Hajj.

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The same applies to similar things such as clipping the nails, covering the head, wearing a fitted garment or putting on perfume. These actions are permissible in the case of necessity, but the compensation mentioned must be offered, because the purpose behind all of these is to remove comfort (during the state of iḥrâm).

﴿And when you are safe [from the enemy]﴾ that is, when you are able to reach the Kaaba without being prevented by an enemy and the like

﴿if anyone wishes to take a break between 'umrah and Hajj﴾ and to have the advantage of exiting iḥrâm after completing 'umrah

﴿he must offer a sacrifice, such as he can obtain easily﴾ that is, he has to offer whatever sacrificial animal he can easily obtain, which is the same as that which is acceptable for uḍḥiyah. This is a sacrifice to be offered in return for doing two rituals in one journey, and because of the blessing that Allah has bestowed upon him by having the benefit of exiting iḥrâm after completing 'umrah and before starting Hajj. The same applies to the one who is doing Hajj *qirân*,[16] because he is doing two rituals in one journey.

The verse implies that the one who is doing Hajj *ifrâd*[17] does not have to offer a sacrifice. It also highlights the permissibility, and indeed the virtue, of Hajj tamattu', and that it is permissible to do it during the months of Hajj.

﴿but if he cannot afford it﴾ that is, the sacrificial animal or its price ﴿he should fast three days during the Hajj﴾; this first becomes permissible when he enters iḥrâm for 'umrah, and the end of the period is the three days after the Day of Sacrifice, the days of stoning the jamarât and staying overnight in Mina. But it is preferable to fast on the seventh, eighth and ninth days of Dhul-Ḥijjah.

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[16] Qirân (Hajj): Hajj plus 'umrah with no break in between; the pilgrim enters ihram for both 'umrah and Hajj, and does not exit ihram after performing 'umrah, until he has completed Hajj.

[17] Ifrâd (Hajj): performing Hajj only, without 'umrah.

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﴿and seven days upon his return﴾ that is, when you have finished all the actions of Hajj, it is permissible to do these fasts in Makkah, or on the road, or after reaching home.

﴿This﴾ that is, what is mentioned about the obligation of offering a sacrifice in the case of Hajj tamattu'
﴿is for the one whose family is not present at the Sacred Mosque [that is, not residing in Makkah]﴾, meaning that they live at the distance at which it becomes permissible to shorten one's prayers, or further away than that according to the customary definition. Such are the people for whom the sacrifice is obligatory, because they are doing two rituals in one journey. As for those whose families are present at the Sacred Mosque (that is, they reside in Makkah), they do not have to offer the sacrifice, because the reason for it is not applicable in their case.

﴿And fear Allah﴾ that is, in all your affairs, by obeying His commands and heeding His prohibitions. That also includes following what is commanded and forbidden in this verse.

﴿and know that Allah is severe in punishment﴾ for those who disobey Him. This is what leads to piety. The one who fears the punishment of Allah will refrain from that which incurs the punishment, just as the one who hopes for the reward of Allah will do that which will bring the reward. As for the one who does not fear the punishment or hope for the reward, he will indulge in what is forbidden and will have the audacity to overstep the limits.




﴿ٱلْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَٰتٌ ۚ فَمَن فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ ٱلْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِى ٱلْحَجِّ ۗ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا۟ مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمْهُ ٱللَّهُ ۗ وَتَزَوَّدُوا۟ فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ ٱلزَّادِ ٱلتَّقْوَىٰ ۚ وَٱتَّقُونِ يَٰٓأُو۟لِى ٱلْأَلْبَٰبِ ﴿١٩٧﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٩٧)

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2:197. The Hajj takes place in the well-known months. Whoever undertakes to perform Hajj during them, there should be no lewdness, nor wrongdoing, nor quarrelling during the Hajj. And whatever good you do, Allah knows it. And take provision [with you] for the journey, but the best of provisions is piety. So fear Me, O people of understanding.

Here Allah tells us that the Hajj occurs ﴿in the well-known months﴾, that is months that were well known to those who were first addressed, in such a way that there was no need to specify them as there was a need to specify the month in which fasting is observed, and as Allah specified the timings of the five daily prayers.

But in the case of Hajj, it was part of the religion of Ibrâheem that was still practised among his progeny and was well known to them.

What is meant by ﴿the well-known months﴾, according to the majority of scholars, is: Shawwâl, Dhul-Qa'dah, and the first ten days of Dhul-Ḥijjah. These are the months in which people usually enter iḥrâm for Hajj.

﴿Whoever undertakes to perform Hajj during them﴾ that is, whoever enters iḥrâm for it, because starting it makes it obligatory, even if it is a supererogatory (nafl) Hajj.

This verse is quoted as evidence by ash-Shâfi'i and those who followed him in the view that it is not permissible to enter iḥrâm for Hajj before its months have begun. I say: if we were to say that this verse offers evidence for the view of the majority of scholars, which is that iḥrâm for Hajj is permissible before those months begin, that would be more likely to be correct. The words ﴿Whoever undertakes to perform Hajj during them﴾ indicate that the decision to undertake to perform Hajj may be taken during the months mentioned, or it may not.

﴿there should be no lewdness, nor wrongdoing, nor quarrelling during the Hajj﴾ that is, it is obligatory to respect one's iḥrâm for

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Hajj, especially during the months of Hajj, and to protect it from anything that may spoil it or detract from it, such as lewdness, which refers to intercourse and its precursors in word or deed, especially in the presence of women. Wrongdoing here refers to all sins, including the things that are forbidden whilst in iḥrâm. Quarrelling refers to arguing and disputing, because it stirs up trouble and creates enmity.

The purpose of Hajj is humility before Allah, seeking to draw close to Him by means of whatever acts of worship one can do, and keeping away from sin; in this way one's Hajj will be accepted, and an accepted Hajj brings no less a reward than paradise. Although these things are not allowed in any place or at any time, they are more emphatically forbidden during the Hajj.

It should be noted that aiming to draw closer to Allah by refraining from sins cannot be done unless you also do what He enjoins. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And whatever good you do, Allah knows it﴾. That includes all good deeds and acts of worship. What is meant is that Allah is aware of it. This implies strong encouragement to do good, especially in those holy places, where one should do as much as one can of prayer, fasting, giving charity, ṭawâf and kindness in word and deed.

Then Allah enjoins the pilgrim to take provision with him for this blessed journey, because by taking provision with him he will be independent of other people and will refrain from taking their wealth by asking for it or begging for it. Taking a lot of provision is beneficial for the traveller, enables him to help others, and will bring him closer to the Lord of the worlds.

What is meant by provision here is that which will sustain him and help him to reach his destination and return.

However the real provision that will bring permanent benefit in this world and in the hereafter is the provision of piety, which is provision that will help one to reach the hereafter and obtain the most perfect

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pleasure and eternal bliss. The one who neglects this provision is the one who will run out of provision and be exposed to all dangers; he will be prevented from reaching the destination of the righteous. This is a commendation of piety.

Then Allah enjoins people of understanding to seek piety and fear Him:

﴿So fear Me, O people of understanding﴾ that is: O people of deep understanding, fear your Lord, for fear of Him is the most important thing that is enjoined by reason, and neglecting it leads to ignorance and poor thinking.




﴿لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَن تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ ۚ فَإِذَا أَفَضْتُم مِّنْ عَرَفَاتٍ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِندَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ ۖ وَاذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَاكُمْ وَإِن كُنتُم مِّن قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿١٩٨﴾ ثُمَّ أَفِيضُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاضَ النَّاسُ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٩٩﴾ فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُم مَّنَاسِكَكُمْ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَذِكْرِكُمْ آبَاءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا ۗ فَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقٍ ﴿٢٠٠﴾ وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿٢٠١﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا ۚ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٠٢﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٩٨-٢٠٢)

2:198. There is no sin on you if you seek the bounty of your Lord [during Hajj, by trading and so on]. Then when you move on from 'Arafāt, remember Allah at the sacred place [Muzdalifah], and remember Him as He has guided you, for you had gone astray before this.

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2:199. Then move on from the place from which all the people move on, and ask for Allah's forgiveness, for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

2:200. Then when you have completed your rites, remember Allah as much as you remember your own forefathers, or even more. There are some people who say: Our Lord, give us good in this world, but they will have no share in the hereafter.

2:201. But there are others who say: Our Lord, give us good in this world and good in the hereafter, and protect us from the torment of the fire.

2:202. They will have their due share [in this world and the hereafter] according to what they earn. And Allah is swift in reckoning.

When Allah (ﷻ) enjoined people to fear Him, He taught them that there is nothing wrong with seeking the bounty of Allah by earning money during the Hajj season and at other times, if it does not distract from that which should be the main focus, namely the Hajj, and the earnings are permissible and attributed to the bounty of Allah, and not to the individual's smartness. Focusing only on the means and forgetting the One Who created the means is what is blameworthy.

﴿Then when you move on from 'Arafāt, remember Allah at the sacred place [Muzdalifah]﴾. This indicates a number of things:

Firstly: The standing in 'Arafāt, which was known to be an essential part of the Hajj. Moving on from 'Arafāt can only come after standing in 'Arafāt.

Secondly: The command to remember Allah at this sacred place, which is Muzdalifah. This was also well known. They would stay there overnight on the night before the Day of Sacrifice, then after *fajr* prayer they would remain in Muzdalifah, offering supplication, until it became very light. Remembering Allah at this place includes both obligatory and supererogatory prayers.

Thirdly: Staying in Muzdalifah comes after the standing in 'Arafāt, as is indicated by the word order in this verse.

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Fourth and fifth: 'Arafât and Muzdalifah are both rituals of Hajj that must be done.

Sixth: Muzdalifah is within the Ḥaram zone, as it is described as sacred.

Seventh: 'Arafât is outside the Ḥaram zone, as may be understood from the fact that Muzdalifah is described as sacred, but not 'Arafât.

﴿and remember Him as He has guided you, for you had gone astray before this﴾ that is, remember Allah (ﷻ), as He has blessed you with guidance after you were misguided and has taught you that which you did not know. This is one of the greatest of blessings for which we must give thanks and respond to it by remembering the Bestower in our hearts and verbally.

﴿Then move on from the place from which all the people move on﴾ that is, then move on from Muzdalifah, from where all the people have moved on, from the time of Ibrâheem (عليه السلام) until the present. What is meant by this moving on was well known to them; it meant moving on and stoning the jamarât, offering the sacrifice, ṭawâf (circumambulation of the Kaaba), sa'iy (going between Ṣafâ and Marwah), staying overnight in Mina during the days of *at-tashreeq*, and completing all the other rituals of Hajj.

Because the purpose of this moving on was as mentioned, and the things mentioned are the last of the rituals of Hajj, and Allah commanded that when finishing them, we should ask Him for forgiveness and remember Him a great deal; we should ask Him for forgiveness for any mistakes or shortcomings in worship. Remembering Allah means thanking Him for His blessings by which He enabled us to perform this great act of worship.

This is what should be done every time one finishes an act of worship: he should ask Allah for forgiveness for shortcomings and thank Him for enabling him to do it. This is unlike the one who thinks that he has done the act of worship perfectly and has done a favour to his Lord by doing it, and that it will give him high status. Such a one

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deserves to be despised (by his Lord) and to have his deed rejected, just as the former deserves to be accepted and enabled to do more good deeds.

Then Allah (ﷻ) tells us about the condition of people. All of them ask Him for their needs and for protection from harm, but their ultimate goals vary. Among them are ﴿some people who say: Our Lord, give us good in this world﴾ that is, they ask Him for things they want in this world that stem from their whims and desires; they will have no share in the hereafter, because they are not interested in it and their focus is limited to this world. Others ask Allah for what is good in both realms and express their need of Allah's help and support with regard to their religious and worldly affairs. Both groups will have a share of what they have earned, and Allah will requite them in accordance with their deeds, aims and intentions, in a manner that is based on justice and generosity. All praise be to Him.

This verse indicates that Allah answers the supplication of everyone who calls upon Him, whether he is a Muslim or a disbeliever or an evildoer, but His answering a supplication does not indicate that He loves the person who offered it or that that person is close to Him, unless it has to do with the hereafter or spiritual matters.

The good that is sought in this world includes everything that is liked by people, such as abundant and enjoyable halal provision, a righteous wife, a child who is a source of joy, ease and comfort, beneficial knowledge, righteous deeds and other things that are liked and are permissible.

The good that is sought in the hereafter is safety from punishment in the grave, during the standing (on the Day of Resurrection) and in hell; attaining the good pleasure of Allah and eternal bliss; and being close to the Most Merciful Lord. Hence this supplication is the most perfect and comprehensive of supplications, and the most appropriate for the believers. Hence the Prophet (ﷺ) often recited this supplication and encouraged others to do likewise.

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﴿ وَٱذْكُرُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ فِىٓ أَيَّامٍ مَّعْدُودَٰتٍ ۚ فَمَن تَعَجَّلَ فِى يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَآ إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ وَمَن تَأَخَّرَ فَلَآ إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ لِمَنِ ٱتَّقَىٰ ۗ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٠٣﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٠٣)

2:203. Remember Allah during the appointed days. But if anyone hastens to leave [Mina] in two days, there is no blame on him, and if any one stays on, there is no blame on him, for him who fears Allah. So fear Allah, and know that you will surely be gathered unto Him.

Here Allah (ﷻ) enjoins us to remember Him during the appointed days, which are the three days of at-tashreeq that come after Eid (*al-Aḍḥâ*), because of the special status and honour of these days, as the remainder of the Hajj rituals are performed during these days, and because the people are the guests of Allah during these days. Hence it is forbidden to fast at this time, and remembrance of Allah during these days has a special quality that is not present on other days. Hence the Prophet (ﷺ) said:
«The days of at-tashreeq are days of eating, drinking and remembering Allah.» (Muslim)

Remembering Him during these days includes remembering Him when stoning the jamarât and offering the sacrifice, and the special dhikr that is recited following the obligatory prayers. In fact some of the scholars said that it is recommended to recite *takbeer* in general at this time, as in the first ten days (of Dhul-Ḥijjah), and this is not far-fetched.

﴿But if anyone hastens to leave [Mina] in two days﴾ that is, departing from Mina before sunset on the second day

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﴿there is no blame on him, and if anyone stays on﴾ that is, stays overnight in Mina on the night before the third day, and stones the jamarât on the following day ﴿there is no blame on him﴾. This is a concession granted by Allah (ﷻ) to His slaves, allowing both options. However it is known that if both are permitted, then staying on is preferable, because it allows for more worship.

From this we may conclude there is no blame or sin on either the one who leaves earlier or the one who leaves late, provided that he is one ﴿who fears Allah﴾ that is, one who fears Allah in all his affairs and throughout the Hajj. The one who fears Allah in all things will have no blame in all things; the one who fears Him in one thing but not another, his requital will match his deeds.

﴿So fear Allah﴾ by obeying His commands and not disobeying Him

﴿and know that you will surely be gathered unto Him﴾, then He will requite you for your deeds. So the one who feared Allah will find the reward of his piety with Him, but the one who did not fear Him will receive the severest punishment. Knowing that there will be requital for deeds is one of the greatest motives for fearing Allah. Hence He encouraged knowledge of that.

 

﴿ وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يُعۡجِبُكَ قَوۡلُهُۥ فِي ٱلۡحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنۡيَا وَيُشۡهِدُ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلۡبِهِۦ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ ٱلۡخِصَامِ ﴿٢٠٤﴾ وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ لِيُفۡسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهۡلِكَ ٱلۡحَرۡثَ وَٱلنَّسۡلَۗ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلۡفَسَادَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ ٱتَّقِ ٱللَّهَ أَخَذَتۡهُ ٱلۡعِزَّةُ بِٱلۡإِثۡمِۚ فَحَسۡبُهُۥ جَهَنَّمُۚ وَلَبِئۡسَ ٱلۡمِهَادُ ﴿٢٠٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٠٤-٢٠٦)

2:204. Among people are those whose speech pleases you in this world, and they call Allah to witness as to what is in their hearts, yet they are the most contentious of opponents.

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2:205. When [such a person] leaves you, he strives to spread mischief in the land and to destroy crops and livestock. But Allah does not like mischief.

2:206. When it is said to him: Fear Allah, his arrogance leads him to sin. Hell is enough for him – what a wretched resting-place.

When Allah (ﷻ) commanded us to remember Him a great deal, especially at the best times, which is good and is in our best interests, and is a righteous deed, He also told us about the one who speaks words but his actions do not match his words. For what a person says will either raise or lower him in status. Hence Allah says: ﴿Among people are those whose speech pleases you in this world﴾ that is, when such a person speaks, his words please the listener, and when he speaks, he thinks that he is saying something useful, and he supports what he is saying by calling ﴿Allah to witness as to what is in﴾ his heart, by saying that Allah knows that what is in his heart is in harmony with what he is saying, but in fact he is lying, because his words contradict his deeds.

If he were telling the truth, his words and deeds would be in harmony, as is the case with the believer who is not a hypocrite. Hence Allah says of such people: ﴿yet they are the most contentious of opponents﴾ that is, if you argue with him, you will find him quarrelsome, difficult and stubborn, and what results from that is the worst kind of attitude. This is unlike the attitude of the believer, whose way is the easiest and who submits to the truth and is easy-going.

﴿When [such a person] leaves you﴾ – this refers to the one whose speech pleases you when he speaks to you
﴿he strives to spread mischief in the land﴾ that is, he does his utmost in committing sins, which is spreading mischief in the land
﴿and to destroy﴾ because of that ﴿crops and livestock﴾. Crops and livestock are destroyed and the blessings in them decrease because of his striving to commit sin.

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﴿But Allah does not like mischief﴾. As He does not like mischief, He hates and despises the person who spreads mischief in the land, even if he speaks nice words.

This verse indicates that the words that people say do not prove that they are sincere or insincere, righteous or evildoers, unless there are actions that confirm and prove that. Therefore witnesses, and those who are in the right or in the wrong, should be tested by examining their deeds and checking their behaviour and attitude; we should not be deceived by how they present themselves and praise themselves.

Then Allah tells us that if the one who spreads mischief in the land by committing sin is instructed to fear Allah, he arrogantly and stubbornly rejects that advice, and ﴿his arrogance leads him to sin﴾, thus he combines his sinful actions with arrogance towards the sincere advisers.

﴿Hell﴾ which is the abode of the sinners and the arrogant ﴿is enough for him – what a wretched resting-place﴾ that is, a place to settle and dwell, and unceasing punishment and never-ending distress and despair; the punishment will not be reduced for them and they will have no hope of reward. This is the recompense for their evil deeds. We seek refuge with Allah from ending up like them.

 

﴿وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَشْرِى نَفْسَهُ ٱبْتِغَآءَ مَرْضَاتِ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ رَءُوفٌۢ بِٱلْعِبَادِ ﴿٢٠٧﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٠٧)

2:207. But there are others who would sell their souls to earn the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is Most Compassionate towards His slaves.

These are the ones who are guided, who have sold their souls, regarding them as cheap, and have given them up in order to seek the

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pleasure of Allah and in the hope of His reward. They have paid the price to the One Who owns everything and Who fulfils His promises and is most compassionate towards His slaves. By His compassion and mercy, He has guided them to that and He will fulfil His promise, as He says:

﴿Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their wealth, in return for which paradise will be theirs...﴾ *(at-Tawbah 9: 111)*

– to the end of the verse. In this verse Allah tells us that they have sold their souls and given them away, and He tells them of His compassion which dictates that they should attain that which they were seeking and hoping for. So after this do not ask about what they will receive from the Most Generous and what they will attain of victory and honour.

 

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱدۡخُلُواْ فِي ٱلسِّلۡمِ كَآفَّةٗ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُواْ خُطُوَٰتِ ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنِۚ إِنَّهُۥ لَكُمۡ عَدُوّٞ مُّبِينٞ ٢٠٨ فَإِن زَلَلۡتُم مِّنۢ بَعۡدِ مَا جَآءَتۡكُمُ ٱلۡبَيِّنَٰتُ فَٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٞ ٢٠٩﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٠٨-٢٠٩)

2:208. O you who believe! Enter into Islam wholeheartedly; and do not follow the footsteps of the Shaytân, for he is to you an avowed enemy.

2:209. If you backslide after the clear [signs] have come to you, then know that Allah is Almighty, Most Wise.

Here Allah (ﷻ) commands the believers to ﴿enter into Islam wholeheartedly﴾ that is, adhering to all the teachings of Islam and not ignoring any of them, and they should not be among those who take their own desires as a god, who follow the command if it is in accordance with their whims and desires, otherwise they do not do so.

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Rather what is required is to make one's inclinations in accordance with religious teaching and to do everything that one is able to do of good; whatever he is unable to do, he will have the intention of doing it (if he were able to), and by virtue of his intention he will attain reward.

Because entering into Islam wholeheartedly cannot be possible and cannot be imagined except by going against the ways of the Shaytân, Allah says: ﴿and do not follow the footsteps of the Shaytân﴾ by committing sins and disobeying Allah, ﴿for he is to you an avowed enemy﴾. The avowed enemy does not enjoin you to do anything but evil and shameful deeds, and that which will bring you harm.

Because people will inevitably make mistakes, Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿If you backslide after the clear [signs] have come to you﴾ that is, after certain knowledge has come to you, ﴿then know that Allah is Almighty, Most Wise﴾.

This is a stern warning which dictates that you should correct the mistakes, for if the sinners disobey the Almighty, the Subduer, the Most Wise, He will subdue them by His might and will punish them in accordance with His wisdom, for it is by His wisdom that He punishes the sinners and evildoers.

 

﴿هَلْ يَنظُرُونَ إِلَّآ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ فِى ظُلَلٍ مِّنَ ٱلْغَمَامِ وَٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ وَقُضِىَ ٱلْأَمْرُ ۚ وَإِلَى ٱللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ ٱلْأُمُورُ ﴿٢١٠﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢١٠)

2:210. Are they only waiting for Allah to come to them in the shadows of the clouds, together with the angels? But then the matter would already have been decided. And to Allah all matters go back [for decision].

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This is a stern warning and threat that makes the heart tremble. Here Allah (ﷻ) is saying: are those who strive to spread mischief in the land, who follow in the footsteps of the Shaytân, who ignore the commands of Allah, waiting for anything but the day of recompense for their deeds, which is filled with horrors, hardships and terrifying scenes that will shake the hearts of the evildoers, when the bad consequences of evil deeds will be inevitable for the evildoers? That is because Allah (ﷻ) will roll up the heavens and the earth, the stars will be scattered, the sun and moon will be folded up, the noble angels will descend and surround all creatures, and the Creator (ﷻ) will descend ﴿in the shadows of the clouds﴾, to judge with justice among His slaves. The Balance will be set up and the records will be spread out; the faces of those who are blessed will be brightened whilst the faces of those who are doomed will be darkened. Those who were doers of good will be distinguished from those who were doers of evil, and each will be requited for his deeds. Then the wrongdoer will bite his hands, when he realises what his situation really is.

This verse and others like it provide evidence for the view of ahl as-Sunnah wal-jamâ'ah, who affirm the divine attributes such as rising above, descending, coming and other attributes that Allah (ﷻ) has affirmed for Himself, or that His Messenger (ﷺ) has told us of. They affirm them in a manner that is befitting to the majesty and greatness of Allah, without likening Him to His creation or misinterpreting or denying any attribute. This is unlike the various groups who deny the divine attributes, such as the Jahamis, Mutazilites, Ash'aris and others of their ilk. As a result of that, they deny the divine attributes and interpret these verses in a manner for which they have no proof; rather their misinterpretation undermines what is stated in the Qur'an and what was stated by the Prophet (ﷺ), and they claim that their view is the correct one.

These people have no evidence from the texts, and no rational basis for their opinion either.

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With regard to the texts, they acknowledge that the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah apparently, and even clearly, support the view of ahl as-Sunnah wal-jamâ'ah, and that in order to support their false view, the texts need to be interpreted in a manner other than that which is indicated by the apparent meaning, and they think that the texts should added to and subtracted from. This, as you can see, is not acceptable to one who has the slightest amount of faith in his heart.

From a rational point of view, there is nothing to support the notion that these attributes should be denied; rather reason indicates that being able to do a thing is more perfect than not being able to do it, and that divine actions having to do with the divine essence and those having to do with His creation are perfect. If they say that affirming these attributes is likening Him to His creation, the response is: speaking of the divine attributes is like speaking about the divine essence. Just as Allah has an essence that is not like any other essence, Allah has attributes that are not like the attributes of others. His attributes are connected to His essence, and the attributes of His creation are connected to their essences. Affirming them does not imply likening Him to His creation in any way whatsoever.

It may also be said to the one who affirms some of the attributes and denies others, or affirms the divine names but not the divine attributes: either you affirm everything that Allah has affirmed for Himself and that His Messenger (ﷺ) has affirmed, or you deny everything, which amounts to denying the very existence of the Lord of the worlds. As for your affirming some of the attributes and denying some, we say: show us the difference between those which you affirm and those which you deny; you will never find any difference between them. If you say: those attributes that I affirm do not lead to likening Him to His creation, the response of ahl as-Sunnah is: affirming what you deny does not imply likening Him to His creation. If you say: I do not see in that which I deny anything but likening Allah to His creation, those who deny all the attributes will say: we do

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not understand what you do affirm as meaning anything other than likening Him to His creation. Thus the answer that you give to those who deny the divine attributes will be the same as the answer given by ahl as-Sunnah concerning the attributes that you deny.

The point is that whoever denies some of the divine attributes that are affirmed by the Qur'an and Sunnah, whilst affirming others, is contradicting himself and there is no shar'i rational evidence for what he says; rather he is contradicting both reason and text.




﴿سَلْ بَنِيٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ كَمْ ءَاتَيْنَٰهُم مِّنْ ءَايَةٍۭ بَيِّنَةٍ ۗ وَمَن يُبَدِّلْ نِعْمَةَ ٱللَّهِ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَتْهُ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَدِيدُ ٱلْعِقَابِ ﴿٢١١﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢١١)

2:211. Ask the Children of Israel how many clear signs We have sent them. But if any one, after Allah's favour has come to him, substitutes [something else], then Allah is severe in punishment.

﴿Ask the Children of Israel how many clear signs We have sent them﴾, that pointed to the truth and confirmed that the Messengers spoke the truth, and they were certain of them and recognised them as signs, but they did not give thanks for this blessing as they should have done; rather they were ungrateful for it and they substituted ingratitude for the blessing of Allah. Hence they deserved that Allah should send down His punishment upon them and deprive them of His reward. Allah (ﷻ) described ingratitude for the blessing as a substitution for it because if Allah bestows a blessing, either spiritual or worldly, upon a person and he does not give thanks for it or do what is required of him as a result, then it will diminish and disappear, and will be replaced with disbelief and sin. Thus ingratitude becomes a substitution for the blessing. As for the one who gives thanks to Allah (ﷻ) and does what is required of him, the blessing becomes established and continues, and Allah gives him more of it.

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﴿ زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٢١٢﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢١٢)

2:212. The life of this world is made to appear attractive to those who disbelieve, and they scoff at those who believe. But those who fear Allah will be above them on the Day of Resurrection, for Allah bestows His abundance without measure on whom He will.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that in the case of those who disbelieve in Allah and His revelations, and Messengers, and do not submit to His law, the life of this world has been made attractive to them, so they are content and happy with it. Thus all their whims and desires, wishes and efforts are focused on it; they turn towards it and strive hard to acquire worldly gains; they give it the utmost importance and show respect to those who share their worldly interests and focus on accumulation; they look down on the believers and mock them, saying: Are these the people among us to whom Allah has shown His favour? This stems from their lack of understanding and their shortsightedness, for this world is the realm of tests and trials, in which hard times come to believers and disbelievers alike, but if bad things happen to the believer in this world, he bears it with patience and seeks reward with Allah, hence Allah alleviates it for him because of his faith and patience in a way that does not happen for anyone except the believer.

What really matters is true superiority in the hereafter. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿But those who fear Allah will be above them on the Day of Resurrection﴾. So those who fear Allah will be in the highest levels of paradise, enjoying all kinds of delight, happiness and rejoicing, whilst the disbelievers will be beneath them in the lowest depths

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of hell, being punished with all kinds of torment, humiliation and eternal misery that will never end. This verse offers consolation to the believers and condemnation of the disbelievers, because provision in this world and in the hereafter can only come by the decree of Allah, and it cannot be attained except by the will of Allah. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿for Allah bestows His abundance without measure on whom He will﴾. Worldly provision is granted to believers and disbelievers alike; as for spiritual provision of knowledge, faith, love of Allah, fear of Him and hope in Him, and the like, He only grants them to those whom He loves.




﴿كَانَ ٱلنَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَٰحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنزَلَ مَعَهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ بِٱلْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ ٱلنَّاسِ فِيمَا ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فِيهِ ۚ وَمَا ٱخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَتْهُمُ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتُ بَغْيًۢا بَيْنَهُمْ ۖ فَهَدَى ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لِمَا ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فِيهِ مِنَ ٱلْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِۦ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ يَهْدِى مَن يَشَآءُ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢١٣﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢١٣)

2:213. Humankind was one single nation, then Allah sent Messengers with glad tidings and warnings, and with them He sent the scripture in truth, to judge between people in matters wherein they differed. But none differed concerning it except those to whom it was given – after the clear signs had come to them – out of mutual envy. So Allah by His grace guided the believers to the truth concerning that wherein they differed. For Allah guides whom He will to a path that is straight.

People were united in guidance for ten generations after Nooḥ (عليه السلام), then when they differed concerning religion, some of them disbelieved and the rest of them continued to follow the true religion. Disputes and conflicts occurred, and Allah sent the Messengers to

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judge between people and establish proof against them. According to another scholarly opinion, they were united in disbelief, misguidance and wretchedness, with no light or faith amongst them. Then Allah (ﷻ) had mercy on them and sent the Messengers to them, ﴿with glad tidings﴾ that the one who obeyed Allah would see the results of his obedience, such as provision, physical and spiritual strength, a good life and, most important of all, attaining the pleasure of Allah and paradise.

﴿and warnings﴾ that the one who disobeyed Allah would see the results of his sin, such as being deprived of provision, weakness, humiliation, a hard life and, worst of all, the wrath of Allah and hell. ﴿and with them He sent the scripture in truth﴾, containing true stories and just commands. Everything that the scripture contains is truth that decides between two who disagree concerning major and minor issues of religion. This is what should be done in the event of differences and disputes: the dispute should be referred to Allah and to His Messenger. Were it not that the answer for the issue is to be found in His Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ), He would not have commanded us to refer to them.

Having mentioned the great blessing of sending down the scriptures to the People of the Book, which dictated that they should have been united in following them, Allah (ﷻ) then tells us that they transgressed against one another, and many disputes and conflicts arose among them; they differed concerning the scripture when they should have been the first of the people to unite on the basis of the scripture. That happened after they had learned and knew for certain the clear signs and definitive proof. Thus they went far astray.

﴿So Allah by His grace guided the believers﴾ of this Ummah ﴿to the truth concerning that wherein they differed﴾. With regard to everything concerning which the People of the Book disagreed and went astray from the correct view, Allah guided this Ummah to the truth concerning it, and ﴿by His grace﴾ and His mercy He made it easy for them.

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﴿For Allah guides whom He will to a path that is straight﴾. He calls all of humanity to the straight path, on the basis of His justice and so as to establish proof against them, lest they say: No bearer of glad tidings and no warner came to us. And by His grace and mercy, and with His help and kindness, He guides whomever He will among His slaves. This is His blessing and kindness, and that is his justice and wisdom.




﴿ أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَن تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُم مَّثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِن قَبْلِكُم ۖ مَّسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَىٰ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ ﴿٢١٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢١٤)

2:214. Or do you think that you will enter paradise without such [trials] as came to those who passed away before you? They encountered suffering and adversity, and were so shaken in spirit that even the Messenger and the believers who were with him said: When will the help of Allah come? Verily, the help of Allah is [always] near.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He will inevitably test His slaves with both ease and hardship, as He tested those who came before them. This is His way that never alters or changes. Whoever adheres to His religion and follows His laws will inevitably be tested; if he is patient in bearing the decree of Allah and does not worry about the difficulties he encounters for His sake, then he is the sincere one who has attained true happiness and high status. Whoever regards the trials that befall people as a punishment from Allah, in that hardship deterred him from carrying on what he had committed himself to, then he is insincere in his claim to be a believer, because faith is not

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mere wishful thinking and claims, unless it is proven or disproven by one's deeds.

That also happened to previous nations, as Allah tells us: ﴿They encountered suffering﴾ that is, poverty ﴿and adversity﴾ that is, physical disease ﴿and were so shaken in spirit﴾ with all kinds of fears such as threats to kill or banish them, seizing their wealth, killing their loved ones, and other types of harm, until they reached a point where they were so shaken in spirit that they started to think that the help of Allah was slow in coming, even though they were certain of it, but it was so hard that ﴿even the Messenger and the believers who were with him said: When will the help of Allah come?﴾ Because relief comes when the calamity has become intense, and the worse it gets the sooner it comes, Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Verily, the help of Allah is [always] near﴾. This is how it is for everyone who adheres to the truth: he will be tested.

Every time the test becomes too hard, if he is patient and persists in the path he is following, the test will turn into a gift for him, and hardship will turn into ease and will be followed by victory over the enemy and healing from the spiritual diseases in his heart. This verse is like the verses in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Did you think that you would enter paradise when Allah has not yet seen who among you will strive hard [in jihad] and has not seen who will remain steadfast?﴾ *(Âl 'Imrân 3: 142)*

﴿Do people think that once they say: We believe, they will be left alone and not be tested? Indeed, We tested those who came before them. For Allah will surely make known those who are sincere and will surely make known those who are liars.﴾ *(al-'Ankaboot 29: 2-3)*

Thus when faced with tests and trials, the individual will be either honoured or humiliated.

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﴿ يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنفِقُونَ ۖ قُلْ مَآ أَنفَقْتُم مِّنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَٰلِدَيْنِ وَٱلْأَقْرَبِينَ وَٱلْيَتَٰمَىٰ وَٱلْمَسَٰكِينِ وَٱبْنِ ٱلسَّبِيلِ ۗ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا۟ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِهِۦ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢١٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢١٥)

2:215. They ask you what they should spend [in charity]. Say: Whatever good you spend should be for parents, kindred, orphans and those in need, and for wayfarers, and whatever good you do, Allah is aware of it.

That is, they ask you about spending, which includes asking about what is spent and on whom it is spent. Allah responded by saying: ﴿Say: Whatever good you spend﴾, whether it is a smaller or greater amount, the most deserving people of it, the most entitled to be given precedence, the ones who have the greatest rights over you, are parents to whom it is obligatory to show kindness and it is forbidden to disobey them. One of the greatest ways of showing kindness to them is to spend on them, and one of the greatest kinds of disobedience to parents is to fail to spend on them. Hence spending on them is obligatory for the one who can afford it.

Then after parents come relatives of varying degrees, the closest then the next closest, according to the degree of closeness and of need. Spending on them is both an act of charity and upholding ties of kinship.

﴿orphans﴾ – this refers to small children who have no breadwinner; they are usually in need because they are not able to look after themselves and they have lost their breadwinner. So Allah enjoined people to take care of them, out of mercy and kindness towards them.

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﴿and those in need﴾. This refers to those who have urgent needs and are helpless. They should be given charity to meet their needs and make them independent of means.

﴿and for wayfarers﴾. The wayfarer is a stranger who is cut off in a foreign land. He should be helped on his way by spending on that which will help him to reach his destination.

Allah (ﷻ) singled out these categories for mention because of the severity of their need. Then Allah (ﷻ) spoke in more general terms: ﴿and whatever good you do﴾ of charity to these people and others, and all kinds of acts of obedience and worship – because they all come under the heading of good.
﴿Allah is aware of it﴾ and will reward you for it and preserve that reward for you, each according to his intention and sincerity, how much or how little he spent, the severity of the need for it, and the impact of it and how beneficial it was.




﴿كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ وَعَسَىٰٓ أَن تَكْرَهُوا۟ شَيْـًٔا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ وَعَسَىٰٓ أَن تُحِبُّوا۟ شَيْـًٔا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢١٦﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢١٦)

2:216. Fighting is prescribed for you, even though you dislike it. But it may be that you dislike a thing although it is good for you, and that you like a thing although it is bad for you. Allah knows, and you do not know.

This verse enjoins fighting for the sake of Allah, after the believers had been instructed to refrain from fighting because of their weakness and lack of readiness. But when the Prophet (ﷺ) migrated to Madinah, and the Muslims increased in numbers and strength,

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Allah (ﷻ) commanded them to fight. He stated that it was something disliked by them, because of what it entails of effort, hardship and exposure to different kinds of fear and risk, yet despite that it is still pure good, because of what it brings of great reward, protection from severe punishment, victory over the enemy, acquiring booty and other benefits, despite the fact that it is disliked.

﴿But it may be ... that you like a thing although it is bad for you﴾, such as refraining from jihad and preferring ease and comfort. This is bad because it leads to defeat, the enemy gaining the upper hand over Islam and its people, humiliation and degradation, loss of great reward, and incurring punishment.

These verses all confirm that doing good deeds that may be disliked – because of the hardship involved – is undoubtedly good, and that doing bad deeds that may be liked – because of the imagined comfort and pleasure involved – is undoubtedly bad.

With regard to what options one may have in worldly affairs, the above is not always the case. But usually if the believer likes something, then Allah diverts it from him in some way, it is better for him, so the most appropriate response in that case is to give thanks to Allah and to think that what happened is good, because he knows that Allah (ﷻ) is more merciful to him than he is to himself, and is more able to direct His slaves to that which is in his best interests, and knows better than he does what is in his best interests, as He says: ﴿Allah knows, and you do not know﴾. So the most befitting response is to accept whatever He decrees for you, whether you like it or not.

However, if the command to fight was not limited, it would have included the sacred months and others, so Allah (ﷻ) made an exception concerning fighting during the sacred months, and said:

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﴿ يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلشَّهْرِ ٱلْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ ۖ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ ۖ وَصَدٌّ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌۢ بِهِۦ وَٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِۦ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَٱلْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ ٱلْقَتْلِ ۗ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يُقَٰتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَن دِينِكُمْ إِنِ ٱسْتَطَٰعُوا۟ ۚ وَمَن يَرْتَدِدْ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِۦ فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَٰلُهُمْ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْـَٔاخِرَةِ ۖ وَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلنَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿٢١٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢١٧)

2:217. They ask you about fighting in the sacred month. Say: Fighting therein is a grave offence; but graver is it in the sight of Allah to bar others from the path of Allah, to disbelieve in Him, to prevent access to the Sacred Mosque and to drive out its people from it. Persecution is worse than slaughter. Nor will they cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith if they can. And if any of you turn back from their faith and die as disbelievers, their deeds will come to nothing in this world and in the hereafter; they will be inhabitants of the fire and will abide therein forever.

The majority of scholars are of the view that the prohibition on fighting during the sacred months was abrogated by the command to fight the polytheists wherever they are found. However some of the commentators said that it was not abrogated, because that which is mentioned in general terms is to be interpreted in the light of that which is specific, and this verse is specific, whereas the verse that speaks of fighting the polytheists wherever they are found is general in meaning (therefore the latter should be understood in the light of the former). Moreover, one of the distinctive characteristics, which in fact is the major characteristic, of the sacred months is that fighting is prohibited during them. But this is limited to initiating the fight only;

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﴿ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَٱلَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا۟ وَجَٰهَدُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢١٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢١٨)

2:218. Those who believed and migrated and fought for the sake of Allah – it is they who have the hope of Allah's mercy. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

This refers to the deeds that are the basis of being blessed, the main feature of which is true servitude to Allah; from them it may be known to what extent a person is a winner or a loser.

With regard to faith, do not ask about its virtue. How can you ask about something which is the factor that differentiates between those who are blessed and those who are doomed, between the people of paradise and the people of hell? This is a factor which determines whether a person's good deeds will be accepted from him; if it is absent, then no obligatory or supererogatory good deed will be accepted from him.

As for migration, this refers to leaving loved ones with whom one grew up in order to please Allah (ﷻ). The migrant leaves his homeland, his property, his family and his friends, seeking to draw closer to Allah and to support His religion.

As for fighting for the sake of Allah, it means striving and fighting the enemy in battle, doing one's utmost to support the religion of Allah and suppress the religion of the Shayṭân. It is the pinnacle of righteous deeds which brings the best of rewards. It is the main reason for the spread of Islam, defeating the idol worshippers and bringing security to the Muslims, their property and their children.

The one who does these three deeds, despite the difficulties involved, will be more likely to do other good deeds.

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Such people deserve to be the ones who hope for the mercy of Allah, because they have taken measures that lead to mercy. This indicates that hope can only come after implementing the means that lead to blessing. As for hope that is accompanied by laziness and failure to take proper measures, this is helplessness, wishful thinking and self-defeat; it is indicative of weak resolve and lack of reason, like the one who hopes to have a child without getting married, or the one who hopes for a harvest without sowing any seed and irrigating it, and so on.

﴿it is they who have the hope of Allah's mercy﴾ – these words indicate that even if a person does these deeds, he should not rely on them, rather he should hope for the mercy of his Lord, and hope that his deeds will be accepted, his sins forgiven and his faults concealed.

Hence Allah says, ﴿And Allah is Oft-Forgiving﴾ that is, to the one who repents sincerely
﴿Most Merciful﴾ – His mercy encompasses all things and His kindness extends to every living creature.

This indicates that the one who does the deeds mentioned will attain the forgiveness of Allah, because good deeds erase bad deeds, thus attaining the mercy of Allah.

If he attains forgiveness, punishments in this world and in the hereafter, which are the consequences of sin, will be warded off from him, because his sins have been forgiven and their effects erased. If he attains mercy, he will attain all that is good in this world and in the hereafter. In fact the deeds mentioned are part of Allah's mercy to them: were it not for His guiding them, they would not have wanted to do them; if He had not helped them, they would not have been able to do them; were it not for His kindness towards them, they would not have completed them and they would not have been accepted from them. To Him be all praise, from beginning to end, for He is the One Who granted the means and the outcome.

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﴿ ۞ يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلْخَمْرِ وَٱلْمَيْسِرِ ۖ قُلْ فِيهِمَآ إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَٰفِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَآ أَكْبَرُ مِن نَّفْعِهِمَا ۗ وَيَسْـَٔلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنفِقُونَ قُلِ ٱلْعَفْوَ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمُ ٱلْـَٔايَٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١٩﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢١٩)

2:219. They ask you about intoxicants and gambling. Say: In them is great sin, and some benefit for people; but the sin is greater than the benefit. They ask you how much they are to spend. Say: Whatever is surplus to your needs. Thus does Allah make clear to you His revelations, so that you may reflect –

That is, the believers ask you – O Messenger (ﷺ) – about the rulings on intoxicants and gambling. These were common practices during the jâhiliyah and when Islam first came. It was as if there was some uncertainty about them, hence they asked about the rulings on them. So Allah commanded His Prophet (ﷺ) to explain to them the benefits and harms that they entailed. This was a precursor to the prohibition on them, which was inevitable.

Allah tells us that the sin and harm that result from them, such as loss of reason and wealth, preventing people from remembering Allah and praying, and the enmity and hostility that they may create are greater than the benefits that people think come, from them, such as making money by dealing in intoxicants and what they gain from gambling, and the pleasures they get when indulging in them. This statement is aimed at deterring people from them, because the wise person will try to attain that which is clearly of benefit and will seek to avoid that which does more harm than good.

But because they were so used to them, it was difficult to make them give them up all at once. Hence this verse came as a precursor to the prohibition which is mentioned in the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

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﴿O you who believe, intoxicants, gambling, idols and divining arrows are an abomination, of Shaytân's handiwork; therefore avoid such [abomination], so that you might prosper.﴾ *(al-Mâ'idah 5: 90)*

This is by the kindness, mercy and wisdom of Allah. Hence when this verse was revealed, 'Umar said, "We have given them up, we have given them up."

With regard to *khamr* (translated here as ﴿intoxicants﴾), this word refers to any intoxicant that affects the mind, no matter what kind of substance it is. Gambling refers to any contest in which one of the two sides pays the other, such as dice games and chess, or any verbal or physical contest in which prizes are awarded, apart from horse and camel races and archery. These types of contests are permissible, because they help with jihad; hence the Lawgiver granted a concession allowing them.

﴿They ask you how much they are to spend﴾ this is a question about how much they should spend of their wealth. Allah made it easy for them, and instructed them to spend the surplus, which is what is affordable of their wealth and is surplus to their needs and basic necessities. This differs from one person to another, according to his means and whether he is rich or poor or somewhere in between. Each should give what is surplus to his needs, even if it is half a date.

Hence Allah commanded His Messenger (ﷺ) to take what is surplus from people and what they give in charity, and not to burden them with something that would be too difficult for them. Allah (ﷻ) did not enjoin this upon us because of any need on His part or because He wanted to burden us with more than we can afford; rather He enjoined upon us that which is in our interests and is easy for us, and that which is beneficial for us and our brothers. For that He deserves the most perfect of praise.

After explaining this to others in a clear way and outlining the reasons for which He prescribed it, He said: ﴿Thus does Allah make

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clear to you His revelations﴾ that is, (His revelations) point to the truth, highlight beneficial knowledge and clarify matters
﴿so that you may reflect﴾




﴿فِي ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَيَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلْيَتَٰمَىٰ ۖ قُلْ إِصْلَاحٌ لَّهُمْ خَيْرٌ ۖ وَإِن تُخَالِطُوهُمْ فَإِخْوَٰنُكُمْ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ ٱلْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ ٱلْمُصْلِحِ ۚ وَلَوْ شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ لَأَعْنَتَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٠﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٢٠)

2:220. – on this life and the hereafter. They ask you concerning [the property of] orphans. Say: The best thing to do is to manage it in their interests; if you mix their affairs with yours, then they are your brothers; and Allah knows who is dishonest and who is honest. And if Allah willed, He could have made things hard for you. Allah is indeed Almighty, Most Wise.

﴿– on this life and the hereafter﴾. That is, so that you may use your mind and ponder the wisdom behind His laws, and realise that His commands are in your best interests in this world and the hereafter; and also so that you might think about this world and how quickly it will end, so that you will reject it, and think about the hereafter and how it will last forever, and that it is the realm of requital, so that you will prepare for it.

﴿They ask you concerning [the property of] orphans...﴾. When the verse:

﴿Verily, those who devour the property of orphans unjustly take nothing into their bellies but fire. Soon they will burn in a raging fire.﴾ *(an-Nisâ'4: 10)*

– was revealed, that was very difficult for the Muslims, and they separated their food from the food of the orphans, for fear that they

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might eat it, even in situations where they usually shared food. They asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about that, and Allah (ﷻ) told them that what is meant is to manage orphans' wealth in the best way, by protecting it, taking care of it and making it increase through trade, and that mixing with them with regard to food and other matters was permissible if it was done in a way that did not harm the orphans, because they are your brothers and it is normal for a person to mix with his brother. What matters in this case is the intention and the deed. If Allah knows that a person is sincere and honest towards the orphan in his intentions, and that he does not want to take his wealth, then if he used any of the orphan's wealth unintentionally, there would be no blame on him. But if Allah knows that by mixing the two, a person intends to take and devour the orphan's wealth, then this is the one who is to be blamed, and he is sinning. The means come under the same ruling as the ends.

This verse indicates that different types of mixing with regard to food, drink and trade are permissible. This is a concession granted by the kindness of Allah, to make things easy for the believers. Otherwise, ﴿if Allah willed, He could have made things hard for you﴾ that is, He could have made it difficult for you by not granting you this concession, then it would be difficult for you and you would be sinning.

﴿Allah is indeed Almighty﴾ that is, He has perfect strength and all things are under His control, but at the same time He is ﴿Most Wise﴾ and only does that which His perfect wisdom and care dictate. His might does not contradict His wisdom, so it cannot be said that whatever He wills He does whether it is in accordance with wisdom or not. Rather we should say that His actions and rulings are in accordance with His wisdom, so He does not create anything in vain; rather it must be for a reason, whether we know it or not. By the same token, He does not prescribe anything for His slaves without it being connected to wisdom; He only enjoins that which is purely or mostly

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in our best interests, and He does not forbid anything but that which is purely or mostly bad, because of His perfect wisdom and mercy.




﴿وَلَا تَنكِحُوا۟ ٱلْمُشْرِكَٰتِ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنَّ ۚ وَلَأَمَةٌ مُّؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّن مُّشْرِكَةٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ ۗ وَلَا تُنكِحُوا۟ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنُوا۟ ۚ وَلَعَبْدٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ خَيْرٌ مِّن مُّشْرِكٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكُمْ ۗ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى ٱلنَّارِ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ يَدْعُوٓا۟ إِلَى ٱلْجَنَّةِ وَٱلْمَغْفِرَةِ بِإِذْنِهِۦ ۖ وَيُبَيِّنُ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٢١﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٢١)

2:221. Do not marry the polytheist women until they believe, for a believing slave girl is better than a polytheist woman, even though she may please you; and do not give your daughters in marriage to polytheists until they believe, for a believing slave is better than a polytheist, even though he may please you. They invite unto the fire, and Allah invites unto paradise and unto forgiveness by His grace, and He explains His revelations to humankind so that they may bear them in mind.

﴿Do not marry the polytheist women﴾ so long as they are still polytheists

﴿until they believe﴾, because a believing woman – no matter how ugly she may be – is better than a polytheist woman, no matter how beautiful she may be. This is general in meaning and applies to all polytheist women; the verse in Soorat al-Mâ'idah made an exception in permitting marriage to women of the People of the Book, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...chaste women among those who were given the scripture before you...﴾ *(al-Mâ'idah 5: 5)*

﴿and do not give your daughters in marriage to polytheists until they believe﴾. This is general in meaning and there are no exceptions.

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Then Allah (ﷻ) tells us the wisdom behind the prohibition on Muslims, male or female, marrying those who differ from them in religion: ﴿They invite unto the fire﴾ that is, by their words, deeds and attitude, so mixing with them poses a danger, not in worldly terms, but in terms of eternal doom. What we learn from this verse is that it is not allowed to mix with polytheists and innovators, because if it is not permissible to marry them – even though doing so may serve many interests – then it is more appropriate to say that mixing with them in a regular manner is not allowed, especially in cases where the polytheist or innovator is in a higher position than the Muslim, such as if the Muslim is his servant and so on.

The words ﴿and do not give your daughters in marriage to polytheists﴾ also indicate that the presence of the woman's *wali* (guardian) in marriage is essential.

﴿and Allah invites unto paradise and unto forgiveness﴾ that is, He calls His slaves to attain paradise and forgiveness, one of the effects of which is to ward off punishment. That is achieved by calling people to the means of attaining that, such as righteous deeds, sincere repentance and beneficial knowledge.

﴿and He explains His revelations﴾ that is, His rulings and the wisdom behind them ﴿to humankind that they may bear them in mind﴾. That is so that they may remember that which they forget and learn that which they did not know, and to pay attention to that which they have been neglecting.




﴿وَيَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلْمَحِيضِ ۖ قُلْ هُوَ أَذًى فَٱعْتَزِلُوا۟ ٱلنِّسَآءَ فِى ٱلْمَحِيضِ ۖ وَلَا
تَقْرَبُوهُنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَطْهُرْنَ ۖ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ ٱللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلتَّوَّٰبِينَ
وَيُحِبُّ ٱلْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ ﴿٢٢٢﴾ نِسَآؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ فَأْتُوا۟ حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّىٰ شِئْتُمْ ۖ وَقَدِّمُوا۟ لِأَنفُسِكُمْ

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وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُم مُّلَاقُوهُ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٢٣﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٢٢-٢٢٣)

2:222. They ask you about menstruation. Say: It is an impurity, so keep away from women during menstruation and do not approach them until they have become pure. Then when they have purified themselves, you may approach them as Allah has ordained. Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and He loves those who purify themselves.

2:223. Your wives are your tilth, so approach your tilth however you will; and send [good deeds] before you for your souls. Fear Allah and know that you will meet Him, and give glad tidings to the believers.

Here, Allah (ﷻ) speaks of their questions about menstruation, and whether a woman is the same after she gets her period as she was before, or she should be avoided completely, as is the practice among the Jews.

Allah tells us that menstruation is an impurity, and because it is an impurity, by His wisdom Allah told His slaves to avoid the place of impurity only. Hence He said: ﴿so keep away from women during menstruation﴾. The phrase translated here as ﴿during menstruation﴾ may refer to the place from which the menstrual bleeding comes (the vagina), hence what is forbidden is intercourse in the vagina in particular (at the time of menstruation). This is haram according to scholarly consensus. The command to keep away from the place of menstruation indicates that intimate activity with the menstruating woman is permissible, so long as intercourse in the vagina is avoided.

But the words ﴿and do not approach them until they become pure﴾ indicate that intimate activity involving the area near the vagina, which is the area between the naval and the knee, should be avoided too, as the Prophet (ﷺ) did this when he wanted to be intimate with his

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wife when she was menstruating; he would tell her to put on a waist wrapper, then he would be intimate with her.

The length of time during which menstruating women should not be approached lasts ﴿until they have become pure﴾ that is, it ends when the bleeding ends. Once the bleeding has ended, the prohibition that applied when the blood was flowing also comes to an end. There are two conditions for it to be permissible to resume regular intimate activity: cessation of bleeding and full ablution (ghusl) following menses. When the bleeding stops, the first condition is met and the second remains. Hence Allah says: ﴿Then when they have purified themselves﴾ that is, done ghusl (full ablution)
﴿you may approach them as Allah has ordained﴾ that is, in the vagina and not in the anus, because the vagina is the place of tilth or sowing the seed.

This indicates that it is obligatory for the menstruating woman to do ghusl and that cessation of the bleeding is a condition of her ghusl being valid.

Because this prohibition is based on Allah's kindness to His slaves and protecting them from harm, He says, ﴿Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance﴾ that is, those who constantly repent from their sins
﴿and He loves those who purify themselves﴾ that is, those who keep away from sin. This includes both physical purity from impure substances and purifying oneself from the impurity that results from breaking wind, sexual activity and so on.

This indicates that purification is prescribed in general, because Allah (ﷻ) loves those who do this. Hence purification in general is a condition of prayer and ṭawâf being valid, and it is a condition of it being permissible to touch the *muṣ-ḥaf*. It also includes purity, in a metaphorical sense, from immoral acts, bad attitudes and vile deeds.

﴿Your wives are your tilth, so approach your tilth however you will﴾, from the front or from the back, but it should only be in the

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vagina, because that is the place of tillage and this is the place from which the infant emerges.

This indicates that anal intercourse is forbidden, because Allah has only permitted intercourse with women in the place from which the infant will emerge. There are many hadiths from the Prophet (ﷺ) which forbid anal intercourse and curse the one who does it.

﴿and send [good deeds] before you for your souls﴾ that is, by drawing close to Allah by doing good deeds. That includes a man being intimate with his wife and having intercourse with her by way of seeking reward for it and in the hope of producing offspring through whom Allah will benefit him.

﴿Fear Allah﴾ that is, in all your affairs you should constantly fear Allah and seek help thereby, knowing ﴿that you will meet Him﴾ and He will requite you for your deeds, righteous or otherwise.

﴿and give glad tidings to the believers﴾. There is no mention of what the glad tidings are about, in order to indicate the general meaning and that they will have glad tidings in this world and in the hereafter. Attaining all that is good and protection from all that is bad are connected to faith, and this is included in these glad tidings.

This is also indicative of Allah's love for the believers and for that which pleases them. It also shows us that it is recommended to motivate them and make them long for that which Allah has prepared for them of reward in this world and in the hereafter.

 

﴿وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ عُرْضَةً لِّأَيْمَـٰنِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّوا۟ وَتَتَّقُوا۟ وَتُصْلِحُوا۟ بَيْنَ ٱلنَّاسِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٤﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٢٤)

2:224. Do not allow your oaths in Allah's name to hinder you from doing righteous deeds, guarding [against evil] and making peace between people, for Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

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The purpose of oaths and vows is to show veneration of that by which you swear and to confirm the action for which you swore the oath. Allah (ﷻ) has commanded us to guard our oaths, which implies fulfilling them in all cases. But He made an exception from that, if fulfilling the oath implies not doing something that is dearer to Him. He has forbidden His slaves to make their oath a hindrance, that is to let the oath be an obstacle that prevents them from doing righteous deeds, doing good, guarding against evil or making peace between people.

The one who swears not to do something that is obligatory must break his oath, and it is haram for him to fulfil his oath. The one who swears not to do something that is *mustaḥabb* (recommended) is encouraged to break his oath. The one who swears to do something that is haram is obliged to break his oath; if he swears to do something *makrooh* (disliked), it is recommended for him to break his oath. With regard to permissible matters, he should guard his oath and not break it.

This verse points to the famous principle that when choosing between many options that may serve many purposes, the most important should be given precedence. In this case, fulfilling the oath serves a purpose, but obeying the commands of Allah with regard to these matters serves a greater purpose, therefore it should take precedence.

Then the verse ends with these two divine names: ﴿for Allah is All-Hearing﴾ that is, He hears all sounds.
﴿All-Knowing﴾ that is, He knows people's aims and intentions. That includes His hearing the words of those who swear oaths, and He knows their intentions, whether they are good or evil. This is a warning that He will requite them for their deeds, and He has full knowledge of their actions and their intentions.

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﴿لَّا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ ٱللَّهُ بِٱللَّغْوِ فِيٓ أَيْمَٰنِكُمْ وَلَٰكِن يُؤَاخِذُكُم بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٥﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٢٥)

2:225. Allah will not call you to account for that which is unintentional in your oaths, but He will call you to account for that which is intended in your hearts; and He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing.

That is, He will not call you to account for that which comes from your lips of empty oaths that people say without intending it or meaning it, but they are simply uttered, as when a man says, "No, by Allah" or "Yes, by Allah," or when he swears an oath concerning something in the past that he thinks he is telling the truth about. Rather the calling to account will be concerning that which was intended in the heart.

This indicates that what matters is what was intended when saying something, as is also the case with regard to actions.

Allah ﴿is Oft-Forgiving﴾ to those who repent to Him ﴿Most Forbearing﴾ towards those who disobey Him, for He does not hasten to punish them; rather He is forbearing towards them, conceals their faults and forgives them, even though He has power over them and could seize them with punishment at any moment.




﴿لِّلَّذِينَ يُؤْلُونَ مِن نِّسَآئِهِمْ تَرَبُّصُ أَرْبَعَةِ أَشْهُرٍ ۖ فَإِن فَآءُو فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٦﴾ وَإِنْ عَزَمُوا۟ ٱلطَّلَٰقَ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٧﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٢٦-٢٢٧)

2:226. For those who take an oath of abstinence from their wives, there should be a [maximum] waiting period of four months; if

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they then go back [to their normal relationship], Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

2:227. But if they decide upon divorce, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

This refers to a type of oath that has to do only with the wife regarding a particular matter. It is an oath whereby the husband swears not to have intercourse with his wife, without specifying a time limit, or specifying a time limit of less or more than four months.

With regard to the one who swears not to have intercourse with his wife, if it is for a period of less than four months, this is like any other oath, and if he breaks it he has to offer expiation, but if he fulfils the term, he does not have to do anything and his wife can make no claim against him, because he has the right to abstain for four months.

However, if it is an oath of permanent abstention, or for a period longer than four months, a limit of four months from the time of the oath must be imposed on him, if his wife demands that, because that is her right. When that period comes to an end, he should be instructed to go back to normal intimate relations; if he does so, then he is not required to do anything apart from offering expiation for his oath. However, if he refuses, then he should be forced to divorce her. If he refuses to divorce her, the judge should issue the divorce.

But resuming normal relations with his wife is more liked by Allah (ﷻ), hence He said: ﴿if they then go back [to their normal relationship]﴾ that is, if they go back to what they swore to abstain from, which is intercourse, then ﴿Allah is Oft-Forgiving﴾ and will forgive them for what they did of swearing that oath, because of their going back.

﴿Most Merciful﴾ as He has ordained expiation and a way out from their oath, and has not made it binding upon them as an unbreakable commitment from which they cannot free themselves. By His mercy

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towards them, He wants them to go back to their wives, and to feel compassion for them.

﴿But if they decide upon divorce﴾ that is, if they refuse to go back, then that indicates that they no longer want them as their wives, which can only be the case if they have decided upon divorce. If this happens, he should do it straight away, otherwise the judge should force him to do it, or issue the divorce himself.

﴿Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing﴾. This is a warning to the one who swears this oath, intending to cause harm.

This verse is quoted as evidence that such an oath can only be sworn with regard to the wife, because Allah says ﴿from their wives﴾, and that it is obligatory to have intercourse (at least) once every four months, because after four months, the husband should be forced either to have intercourse or to divorce his wife, and that can only be because he has failed to do something that is obligatory.




﴿ وَٱلْمُطَلَّقَٰتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَٰثَةَ قُرُوٓءٍ ۚ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَن يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ ٱللَّهُ فِىٓ أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِن كُنَّ يُؤْمِنَّ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ ۚ وَبُعُولَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِى ذَٰلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوٓا۟ إِصْلَٰحًا ۚ وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ ٱلَّذِى عَلَيْهِنَّ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٢٨)

2:228. Divorced women should wait concerning themselves for three menstrual cycles. It is not permissible for them to conceal what Allah has created in their wombs, if they believe in Allah and the Last Day. Their husbands have the greater right to take them back in that period, if they wish for reconciliation. And women have rights similar to the rights over them, according to what is equitable; but men have a degree [of responsibility] over them. And Allah is Almighty, Most Wise.

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That is, women whose husbands have divorced them ﴿should wait concerning themselves﴾ that is, they should observe the 'iddah or waiting period
﴿for three menstrual cycles﴾, whether that is counted from the beginning or the end of the bleeding; there was a difference of scholarly opinion concerning that. However, the correct view is that what is meant by the menstrual cycle is the beginning of the menses. There are several reasons for this waiting period, one of which is to establish the absence of pregnancy. If the woman has three menstrual cycles, it will be known that there is nothing in her womb, so there will be no mixing of lineages (if she remarries). Hence Allah (ﷻ) has commanded women to speak of ﴿what Allah has created in their wombs﴾, and He has forbidden them to conceal either pregnancy or menses, because concealing that leads to very negative consequences. Concealing a pregnancy may lead to attributing the child to someone other than his real father, if the woman likes another man and wants to hasten the end of the 'iddah. If she attributes the child to someone other than his real father, that will result in severing of ties of kinship, prevention of inheritance, and his real *maḥrams* observing hijab in front of him; he may even end up marrying one of his maḥrams unwittingly. On the other hand, if he is attributed to someone other than his real father, then he may end up being inherited from or himself inheriting from people with whom he is not entitled to have this kind of inheritance. It also makes the relatives of the one to whom he is attributed his relatives, which will lead to evil consequences the extent of which no one knows except the Lord of humankind. If nothing else resulted from it except her (the divorced woman) staying with a man whom it is not permissible for her to marry (because she is pregnant from her first husband), which involves persisting in the grave major sin of zinâ (fornication or adultery), that would be sufficient evil.

With regard to concealing menses, by lying and saying that she had her period when she did not, because she wants to hasten the end

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of the 'iddah, this is hastening to put an end to the husband's right to take her back, and making herself permissible to another man, which may lead to evil consequences as discussed above. If she lies and says that there was no menses in order to make her 'iddah last longer, and she takes maintenance from him that he is not obliged to pay, in fact it is haram for her to take it for two reasons: because she is not entitled to it and because she is taking it on the basis of a shar'i ruling but she is lying (about her condition). Moreover, he may take her back after the (real) 'iddah has ended, in which case it would be an immoral relationship, because she is no longer permissible for him. Hence Allah says: ﴿It is not permissible for them to conceal what Allah has created in their wombs, if they believe in Allah and the Last Day﴾.

If they conceal what is in their wombs, this indicates that they do not truly believe in Allah and the Last Day. Otherwise, if they did truly believe in Allah and the Last Day, and knew that they would be requited for their deeds, they would not have done any of these things.

This indicates that what a woman says about herself concerning matters that no one but she could know about, is to be accepted, as in the case of menses, pregnancy and so on.

﴿Their husbands have the greater right to take them back in that period﴾ that is, so long as the woman's 'iddah has not yet ended, her husband has the greater right to take her back
﴿if they wish for reconciliation﴾ that is, because they like them, want them back and love them. What this verse means is that if they do not intend to reconcile with them, then they have no right to take them back. It is not permissible for them to take them back with the intention of harming them or making the 'iddah longer. Does the husband have the right to do that when this is his intention? There are two scholarly views on this matter.

The majority are of the view that he does have a right, even though it is haram. However the correct view is that if he does not wish for reconciliation, then he has no right to do that, as is the apparent

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meaning of the verse. This is another reason for this waiting period: the husband may regret separating from her, so he is given this period of time to think about the matter and make his mind up.

This indicates that Allah (ﷻ) loves harmony and reconciliation between spouses, and He dislikes separation, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «The most disliked of permissible things to Allah is divorce.» (A sound hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)

This applies specifically when the woman has been divorced and the waiting period ('iddah) has not yet ended. But if the waiting period has ended, then she is completely divorced and the husband does not have the greater right to take her back; rather if they agree to get back together, they must do a new marriage contract, fulfilling all the necessary conditions.

﴿And women have rights similar to the rights over them, according to what is equitable﴾ that is, women have rights over and duties towards their husbands, just as their husbands have rights over and duties towards them, both obligatory and recommended.

The reference point with regard to rights and duties between the spouses is what is equitable, and that is to be based on local custom in that particular place and at that particular time, as applicable to men and women of similar social standing. That varies from one time, place, situation, people or custom to another.

This indicates that provision of maintenance, clothing, kind treatment and accommodation, and frequency of intercourse, should be in accordance with what is equitable. This is what the regular marriage contract is based on. But if there are some additional stipulations, then they should be adhered to, unless it is a condition that permits something that is forbidden or forbids something that is permitted.

﴿but men have a degree [of responsibility] over them﴾ that is, men are of higher standing and take the leading role, and have some extra rights over their wives, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

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﴿Men are in charge of women, because Allah has made one of them excel the other, and because they spend of their wealth [on them]...﴾ *(an-Nisâ' 4: 34)*

Moreover, prophethood, and the positions of judge, imam, head of state and other positions of authority are given exclusively to men, and in many cases men are given double what is given to women, as in the case of inheritance and so on.

﴿And Allah is Almighty, Most Wise﴾ that is, He has overwhelming power and absolute authority to which all things yield. Yet – alongside His power – He is Most Wise in all that He does.

Excluded from the general meaning of this verse are: pregnant women, whose 'iddah lasts until they give birth; women with whom the marriage was not consummated, who have no 'iddah; and slave women, whose 'iddah is two menstrual cycles, as was the view of the Companions (رضي الله عنهم). The context of these verses indicates that what is meant here are free women.




﴿ٱلطَّلَٰقُ مَرَّتَانِ ۖ فَإِمْسَاكٌۢ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٌۢ بِإِحْسَٰنٍ ۗ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَن تَأْخُذُوا۟ مِمَّآ ءَاتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ شَيْـًٔا إِلَّآ أَن يَخَافَآ أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ ٱللَّهِ ۖ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ ٱللَّهِ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا فِيمَا ٱفْتَدَتْ بِهِۦ ۗ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ ٱللَّهِ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا ۚ وَمَن يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ ٱللَّهِ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ ﴿٢٢٩﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٢٩)

2:229. Divorce may be pronounced twice; then the wife should either be retained honourably or be released gracefully. It is not lawful for you to take back anything that you have given [to your wives], except when both parties fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah. If you do indeed fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah, then there is no blame on either of them if the woman opts to

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give something for her release. These are the limits ordained by Allah, so do not transgress them; if any do transgress the limits ordained by Allah, it is they who are the wrongdoers.

During the jâhiliyah and at the beginning of Islam, a man could divorce his wife endlessly. If he wanted to cause her harm he would divorce her, then when her 'iddah was about to end, he would take her back. Then he would divorce her again, and this could happen countless times, causing such harm and suffering, the extent of which only Allah knows.

So Allah stated that ﴿Divorce﴾ that is, revocable divorce, in which the husband may take the wife back
﴿may be pronounced twice﴾ so that the husband will be able – if his intention is not to cause harm – to take her back and think again during this period. But anything more than that is not appropriate, because the one who does it more than twice is either transgressing the limit or has no wish to keep her; rather his aim is to cause harm. Hence Allah (ﷻ) instructed the husband to retain or keep his wife ﴿honourably﴾ that is, to treat her kindly as other husbands treat their wives. This is the most correct opinion. Otherwise, he should let her go or release her ﴿gracefully﴾. That includes not taking any of her wealth in return for letting her go, because that is unjust and is taking wealth for nothing in return. Hence Allah says: ﴿It is not lawful for you to take back anything that you have given [to your wives], except when both parties fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah﴾. This refers to *khul'* or releasing the wife in a graceful manner. in a case where the wife dislikes her husband because of his physical appearance, attitude or lack of religious commitment, and she fears that she will not be able to obey Allah by fulfilling her duty towards him.

﴿If you do indeed fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah, then there is no blame on either of them

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if the woman opts to give something for her release﴾ because it is compensation in return for getting what she wants of separation. This shows that khul' is prescribed, if this reason is applicable.

﴿These﴾ that is, the Islamic rulings mentioned above ﴿are the limits ordained by Allah﴾ that is, His rulings that He has prescribed for you and has enjoined you to adhere to them.

﴿if any do transgress the limits ordained by Allah, it is they who are the wrongdoers﴾ and what wrongdoing could be greater than ignoring what is permissible and doing what is forbidden, and not being content with that which Allah has permitted?

Wrongdoing is of three types: wrongdoing that affects a person's relationship with Allah, the gravest of which is shirk or associating others with Him; wrongdoing that affects a person's relationship with other people, for Allah does not forgive shirk unless one repents, but He does not forgive transgressions against the rights of other people; and wrongdoing of a lesser degree than shirk that affects a person's relationship with Allah – this is subject to the will and wisdom of Allah (and He may forgive or punish for it).

 

﴿ فَإِن طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا تَحِلُّ لَهُۥ مِنۢ بَعْدُ حَتَّىٰ تَنكِحَ زَوْجًا غَيْرَهُۥ ۗ فَإِن طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَآ أَن يَتَرَاجَعَآ إِن ظَنَّآ أَن يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ ٱللَّهِ يُبَيِّنُهَا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٠﴾ وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ ٱلنِّسَآءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ ۚ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَارًا لِّتَعْتَدُوا۟ ۚ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَٰلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُۥ ۚ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوٓا۟ ءَايَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ هُزُوًا ۚ وَٱذْكُرُوا۟ نِعْمَتَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَآ أَنزَلَ عَلَيْكُم مِّنَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ وَٱلْحِكْمَةِ يَعِظُكُم بِهِۦ ۚ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣١﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٣٠-٢٣١)

2:230. And if he divorces her [the third time], she will not be lawful for him again until she has married another husband. Then if

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[the latter] divorces her, there is no blame on either of them if they return to each other, provided they feel that they can keep the limits ordained by Allah. Such are the limits ordained by Allah, which He makes clear to those who understand.

2:231. When you divorce women, and they have approached [the end of] their waiting periods, either retain them on equitable terms or release them on equitable terms. Do not retain them in order to harm them, thus overstepping the limits; if anyone does that, then he has wronged himself. Do not make a mockery of Allah's revelations; remember the favours Allah has bestowed upon you, and what He has revealed to you of the Book and wisdom, to teach you. And fear Allah, and know that Allah has knowledge of all things.

﴿And if he divorces her [the third time]﴾, that is the third *ṭalāq* ﴿she will not be lawful for him again until she has married another husband﴾ that is, a genuine marriage in which he has intercourse with her, because the legitimate marriage is that in which there is a contract and intercourse. This is according to scholarly consensus.

It is stipulated that the second marriage should be a genuine marriage; if the aim is to make it permissible for her to go back to the first husband, then it is not a marriage and it does not make her lawful for the first husband. But if she marries the second husband in a genuine marriage and he has intercourse with her, then he leaves her and her 'iddah comes to an end, then ﴿there is no blame on either of them﴾ that is, on the first husband or the wife ﴿if they return to each other﴾ that is, if they make a new marriage contract between them, with mutual consent. Because it refers to them (with no mention of a third party), this indicates that there must be mutual consent.

But it is stipulated, in the event of returning to each other, that they should think ﴿that they can keep the limits ordained by Allah﴾,

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by each of them fulfilling the rights of the other. This applies if they regret their previous conduct that led to separation and they resolved to change for the better. In that case there is no blame on either of them if they return to each other.

What we understand from this verse is that if they do not think that they can keep the limits ordained by Allah, because they think it most likely that they will go back to the way they were before and that the bad attitude has not changed, in that case there will be blame on them, because in all cases where the commands of Allah will not be adhered to and He will not be obeyed, it is not permissible to go ahead.

This indicates that if a person wants to do something, especially positions of major or minor responsibility, he should first examine himself: if he is confident that he has the ability to do it, he should go ahead, otherwise he should refrain.

After explaining these important rulings, Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Such are the limits ordained by Allah﴾ that is, His laws that He has explained clearly.
﴿which He makes clear to those who understand﴾ because they are the ones who will benefit thereby and benefit others.

This obviously highlights the virtue of people of knowledge, because Allah (ﷻ) has addressed this explanation of His limits to them. It also indicates that Allah loves for His slaves to know and understand His limits that He revealed to His Messenger (ﷺ).

Then Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿When you divorce women﴾ – this refers to the revocable divorce, which is the first or second ṭalâq.
﴿and they have approached [the end of] their waiting periods﴾ that is, they are close to the end of their 'iddah,
﴿either retain them on equitable terms or release them on equitable terms﴾ that is, either take them back with the intention of fulfilling their rights, or release them without taking them back or harming them. Hence He says: ﴿Do not retain them in order to harm them, thus

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overstepping the limits﴾, by this action of yours. What is permissible is keeping them on equitable terms and what is forbidden is harming them.

﴿if anyone does that, then he has wronged himself﴾ even if the harm done affects another person, the intention to cause harm will backfire on the one who had that intention.

﴿Do not make a mockery of Allah's revelations﴾. Allah (ﷻ) explained His limits very clearly; what was required was to know them and act accordingly, and keep those limits and not transgress them, because He did not reveal them in vain; rather He revealed them in truth, to be taken seriously and adhered to with all sincerity. Hence He forbade making a mockery of them, which means toying with them and abusing them, such as using them to cause harm by either retaining or releasing a wife, or divorcing frequently, or issuing three divorces at one time. In His mercy, Allah allowed divorce one at a time, out of kindness and in people's best interests.

﴿remember the favours Allah has bestowed upon you﴾ in general, with praise and thanks, acknowledging that in the heart and physically striving to obey Allah

﴿and what He has revealed to you of the Book and wisdom﴾, that is, the Sunnah. Both describe to you the paths of goodness and encourage you to follow them, and they describe the paths of evil, and warn against following them. Allah has told you about Himself and how He deals with His close friends and His enemies; He has taught you that which you did not know.

It was also suggested that what is meant by wisdom is deep understanding of Sharia; the Book contains the rulings and the wisdom highlights the wisdom of Allah in His commands and prohibitions. Both meanings are correct, hence Allah says: ﴿to teach you﴾ that is, by means of what He has revealed to you. This supports the idea that what is meant by wisdom is deep understanding of Sharia, because teaching is the result of explaining the rulings and the wisdom behind them.

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﴿And fear Allah﴾ in all your affairs
﴿and know that Allah has knowledge of all things﴾ and this is why He has explained these rulings to you in a very precise and clear manner which is in the best of people's interests in every time and place. Praise and thanks be to Him.




﴿وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ ٱلنِّسَآءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ أَن يَنكِحْنَ أَزْوَٰجَهُنَّ إِذَا تَرَٰضَوْا بَيْنَهُم بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ يُوعَظُ بِهِۦ مَن كَانَ مِنكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ أَزْكَىٰ لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٢﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٣٢)

2:232. When you divorce women, and they have reached [the end of] their waiting periods, do not prevent them from marrying their [former] husbands, if they have come to an equitable agreement. This instruction is for all amongst you who believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more decent for you. Allah knows, and you do not know.

This is addressed to the guardians of women who have been divorced fewer than three times. When the woman comes out of her 'iddah, if her husband wants to remarry her and she agrees to that, then it is not permissible for the guardian, whether he is her father or any other relative, to prevent her from remarrying out of resentment towards the husband for what he did of divorcing her previously.

This verse states that if the guardian believes in Allah and the Last Day, his faith does not allow him to prevent the marriage, because that is better for you and more decent and more appropriate than what the guardian thinks: that not allowing this new marriage is the right decision and the proper way, and that he is getting his own back on the husband for the previous divorce by not giving her in marriage to him, as is usually the case with those who are stubborn and arrogant.

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So if he thinks that it is better not to give her in marriage, (he should realise that) ﴿Allah knows, and you do not know﴾, so you should comply with the instructions of One Who has knowledge of what is in your best interests, wants that for you, and is able to bring this about in ways that you know or that you do not know.

This verse indicates that the presence of the guardian is essential in marriage, because Allah forbade guardians to prevent marriage and He only issued this prohibition concerning a matter that is under their control and it is their right to decide concerning it.




﴿ وَٱلْوَٰلِدَٰتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَٰدَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ ۖ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَن يُتِمَّ ٱلرَّضَاعَةَ ۚ وَعَلَى ٱلْمَوْلُودِ لَهُۥ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ لَا تُكَلَّفُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۚ لَا تُضَآرَّ وَٰلِدَةٌۢ بِوَلَدِهَا وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ لَّهُۥ بِوَلَدِهِۦ ۚ وَعَلَى ٱلْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ ذَٰلِكَ ۗ فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَن تَرَاضٍ مِّنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا ۗ وَإِنْ أَرَدتُّمْ أَن تَسْتَرْضِعُوٓا۟ أَوْلَٰدَكُمْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَّمْتُم مَّآ ءَاتَيْتُم بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٣﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٣٣)

2:233. Mothers may breastfeed their children for two whole years, for those who wish to complete the full term of breastfeeding. It is the obligation of the one to whom the child belongs to provide food and clothing for them [the mothers] on an equitable basis. No soul should have a burden laid on it greater than it can bear. No mother should be made to suffer harm on account of her child, nor any father on account of his child, and the same duty is incumbent on the heir. If they both decide on weaning, by mutual consent, and after due consultation, there is no blame on them. And if you wish to provide a wet-nurse for your children, there is no blame on you, provided you pay [the wet-nurse] what

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you agreed upon, on an equitable basis. But fear Allah and know that Allah sees well all that you do.

This appears in the form of a statement but what is meant is a command; it refers to what happens anyway, so there is no need to issue instructions that ﴿Mothers may breastfeed their children for two whole years﴾. Because the word translated here as "year" may mean an entire year or most of a year, Allah stipulates that it should be two whole or complete years.

﴿for those who wish to complete the full term of breastfeeding﴾. Then when the two years of breastfeeding are over, breastfeeding is complete; after that the milk becomes like any other food. Hence breastfeeding after two years does not count with regard to creating the maḥram relationship between the breastfeeding woman and the infant.

From this verse, and from the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...and his bearing and weaning take thirty months...﴾ *(al-Aḥqâf 46: 15)*

– it is understood that the minimum length of pregnancy is six months, at which stage a child may be born.

﴿It is the obligation of the one to whom the child belongs﴾ that is, the father

﴿to provide food and clothing for them [the mothers] on an equitable basis﴾. This is applicable whether she is still married to him or is divorced; the father has to give her maintenance by spending on her and clothing her; that is her payment for breastfeeding.

This indicates that if she is still married to him, she is not entitled to any payment other than maintenance and clothing, each one according to his means. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿No soul should have a burden laid on it greater than it can bear﴾. So a poor man should not be forced to spend like a rich man, and the one who cannot afford to pay maintenance should not be forced to do so until he can afford it.

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﴿No mother should be made to suffer harm on account of her child, nor any father on account of his child﴾ that is, it is not permissible to cause harm to the mother because of her child, either by preventing her from breastfeeding him or by not giving what she is entitled to of maintenance, clothing or payment.
﴿nor any father on account of his child﴾ by refusing to breastfeed him in a way that hurts the father, or by asking him for more than what is required of him, and other kinds of harm.

The phrase ﴿the one to whom the child belongs﴾ indicates that the child belongs to the father, because the child is a gift that is given to him, and because he is part of his earnings. Hence it is permissible for the father to take from the son's wealth, whether he agrees or not; this does not apply to the mother.
﴿and the same duty is incumbent on the heir﴾ that is, on the heir of the child, if there is no father and the child has no wealth; the heir is required, like the father, to spend on the infant's maintenance and clothing. This indicates that spending on relatives who are in difficulty is obligatory for well-off relatives who are heirs.

﴿If they both﴾ that is, the parents ﴿decide on weaning﴾ that is, weaning the child before the age of two years ﴿by mutual consent﴾ that is, if they both agree
﴿and after due consultation﴾ that is, discussing the matter between themselves, as to whether it is in the child's best interests or not. If it is in the child's best interests and they both agree, ﴿there is no blame on them﴾ for weaning him before the age of two years.

This verse indicates that if one of them agrees to that but the other does not, or it is not in the child's best interests, then it is not permissible to wean him (before the age of two years).

﴿And if you wish to provide a wet-nurse for your children﴾ that is, if you want to look for wet-nurses other than their mothers, without causing any harm

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﴿there is no blame on you, provided you pay [the wet-nurse] what you agreed upon, on an equitable basis﴾.
﴿But fear Allah and know that Allah sees well all that you do﴾ and He will requite you for that, rewarding good deeds and punishing bad deeds.




﴿وَٱلَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَٰجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا ۖ فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا فَعَلْنَ فِىٓ أَنفُسِهِنَّ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٤﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٣٤)

2:234. If any of you die and leave widows behind, they should refrain from marrying again for four months and ten days. When they have reached the end of their waiting period, there is no blame on you for that which they do with themselves, according to what is reasonable. And Allah is aware of all that you do.

If the husband dies, his wife should wait for four months and ten days; this is obligatory. The wisdom behind it is so that any pregnancy will become apparent during these four months, and the foetus will start moving at the beginning of the fifth month. This is general in meaning, with the exception of the pregnant woman, because the 'iddah of a pregnant woman ends when she gives birth. Moreover, the 'iddah of a slave woman is half that of a free woman, two months and five days.

﴿When they have reached the end of their waiting period﴾ that is, when the 'iddah is over
﴿there is no blame on you for that which they do with themselves﴾ that is, going back to adornment and perfume
﴿according to what is reasonable﴾ that is, in a manner that is not forbidden or disliked.

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This indicates that it is obligatory for the woman whose husband has died to mourn for the length of the 'iddah; this applies to the bereaved wife only and not to women who are divorced or separated. There is scholarly consensus on this point.

﴿And Allah is aware of all that you do﴾ that is, He knows all your deeds, outward and inward, apparent and hidden, and He will requite you for them.

The words ﴿there is no blame on you for that which they do with themselves﴾ are addressed to guardians, which indicates that the guardian is in charge of the woman, and that he should prevent her from doing that which is not permissible and should force her to do that which is obligatory; this is addressed to him and it is his duty.




﴿وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا عَرَّضْتُم بِهِۦ مِنْ خِطْبَةِ ٱلنِّسَآءِ أَوْ أَكْنَنتُمْ فِىٓ أَنفُسِكُمْ ۚ عَلِمَ ٱللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ سَتَذْكُرُونَهُنَّ وَلَٰكِن لَّا تُوَاعِدُوهُنَّ سِرًّا إِلَّآ أَن تَقُولُوا۟ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا ۚ وَلَا تَعْزِمُوا۟ عُقْدَةَ ٱلنِّكَاحِ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ ٱلْكِتَٰبُ أَجَلَهُۥ ۚ وَٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِىٓ أَنفُسِكُمْ فَٱحْذَرُوهُ ۚ وَٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣٥﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٣٥)

2:235. There is no blame on you if you hint at a proposal of marriage or keep it concealed in your hearts. Allah knows that you will think of them, but do not make any secret arrangements with them; rather you may say something appropriate. Do not finally decide on the marriage contract until the prescribed period has come to its end. And know that Allah knows what is in your hearts, so fear Him, and know that Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing.

This ruling applies to the woman who is observing 'iddah following the death of her husband or a divorce, if the husband is still alive. It

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is haram for anyone other than the husband (if he wants to take her back) to state clearly that he wants to propose to her. This is what is meant by the words ﴿do not make any secret arrangements with them﴾. As for hinting, Allah has stated that no blame is entailed in it.

The difference between them is that a clear statement cannot be interpreted as meaning anything other than marriage, and this is forbidden lest it make her hasty and cause her to rush and tell lies about the end of her 'iddah because she wants to get married. This indicates that the means that lead to something haram should be prevented, and that the first husband's rights should be protected, so she should not make any promises to anyone else during her 'iddah.

With regard to hinting, it is anything that may be understood as referring to marriage or to something else. It is permissible to make such hints concerning a woman who is irrevocably divorced, such as saying "I want to get married" or "I would like to know when your 'iddah ends" and so on. This is permissible, because it is not like a clear statement and it is something for which people may have a strong motive that they cannot suppress completely.

The same applies to thinking to oneself about marrying a woman who is still in her 'iddah, when her 'iddah ends: ﴿or keep it concealed in your hearts. Allah knows that you will think of them﴾. All of this has to do with doing that which leads to a marriage contract. As for the marriage contract itself, that is not permissible ﴿until the prescribed period has come to its end﴾ that is, until the 'iddah has ended.

﴿And know that Allah knows what is in your hearts﴾, so have good intentions and not bad intentions, fearing His punishment and hoping for His reward.
﴿and know that Allah is Oft-Forgiving﴾ to the one who commits sin and then repents from it, turning back to his Lord
﴿Most Forbearing﴾ as He does not hasten to punish sinners for their sins, even though He is able to do so.

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﴿لَّا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِن طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمَسُّوهُنَّ أَوْ تَفْرِضُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً وَمَتِّعُوهُنَّ عَلَى الْمُوسِعِ قَدَرُهُ وَعَلَى الْمُقْتِرِ قَدَرُهُ مَتَاعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٢٣٦﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٣٦)

2:236. There is no blame on you if you divorce women before the marriage is consummated or the dowry settled; but give them a gift [as compensation], the wealthy according to his means, and the poor according to his means, a gift of a reasonable amount. This is an obligation on the righteous.

That is, there is no blame or sin on you – O husbands – if you divorce women before consummating the marriage or settling the dowry. But because that is upsetting to her, he should offer compensation by giving a gift. So you should give them gifts in the form of some wealth, as compensation for upsetting them.

﴿the wealthy according to his means, and the poor﴾ that is, the one who is in financial difficulty ﴿according to his means﴾.

This depends on custom, and varies according to circumstances. Hence Allah says ﴿a gift of a reasonable amount﴾. This is an obligatory duty ﴿on the righteous﴾, and they have no right to mistreat them. As they caused them to look forward to marriage and their hearts became attached to the idea, then they did not give them what they wanted, they must – in return for that – give this gift.

How beautiful is this divine ruling, and how indicative of the wisdom and mercy of the Lawgiver. Who is better than Allah in ruling for people of certain faith? This is the ruling concerning women who are divorced before consummation of the marriage and settling the dowry.

Then Allah mentions the ruling on those whose dowry has been settled:

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﴿وَإِن طَلَّقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِن قَبْلِ أَن تَمَسُّوهُنَّ وَقَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً فَنِصْفُ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ إِلَّآ أَن يَعْفُونَ أَوْ يَعْفُوَا۟ ٱلَّذِى بِيَدِهِۦ عُقْدَةُ ٱلنِّكَاحِ ۚ وَأَن تَعْفُوٓا۟ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۚ وَلَا تَنسَوُا۟ ٱلْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٧﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٣٧)

2:237. And if you divorce them before the marriage is consummated, but after their dowry has been settled, then half of the dowry [is due to them], unless they forgo it, or the one in whose hand is the marriage tie [the husband] forgoes his share [and gives her the dowry in full]. And forgoing it is closer to piety. Do not forget to show graciousness to one another, for Allah sees well all that you do.

That is, if you divorce women before consummating the marriage and after settling the dowry, then the divorced women are entitled to half of the settled dowry, and you are entitled to half.

This is obligatory unless someone chooses to show kindness, such as if the woman forgoes her half and gives it up to the husband, she has the right to do so.

﴿or the one in whose hand is the marriage tie﴾ that is, the husband, according to the correct opinion, because he is the one in whose hand is the marriage tie, and because the guardian has no right to forgo what is due to the woman, because he does not have that authority and is not acting as an agent for the woman.

Then Allah encourages people to forgo this wealth, and states that the one who forgoes it is closer to piety, because it is an act of kindness that leads to people feeling at ease, and because the individual should not neglect to do acts of kindness or forget graciousness which is the pinnacle of interaction, because interactions between people occur on two levels: either justice and fairness, which is obligatory and is the basis on which people give and take what is due, or graciousness

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and kindness, which means giving what is not due and being easy-going with regard to one's own rights, suppressing any feelings of annoyance. No one should forget this level, even if that is only on some occasions, especially with regard to those with whom one has to interact or mix with. Allah will reward those who do good by His grace and generosity. Hence He says: ﴿for Allah sees well all that you do﴾.

 

﴿حَٰفِظُوا۟ عَلَى ٱلصَّلَوَٰتِ وَٱلصَّلَوٰةِ ٱلْوُسْطَىٰ وَقُومُوا۟ لِلَّهِ قَٰنِتِينَ ﴿٢٣٨﴾ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرِجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا ۖ فَإِذَآ أَمِنتُمْ فَٱذْكُرُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ كَمَا عَلَّمَكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا۟ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٩﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٣٨-٢٣٩)

2:238. Be ever mindful of prayers, especially the middle prayer; and stand before Allah in devotion.

2:239. If you are afraid [of an enemy and the like], pray on foot or riding, but when you are safe again, remember Allah, for He has taught you what you did not know [before].

Here Allah instructs us to be ever mindful of prayers in general, and of the middle prayer – which is *'aṣr* – in particular. Being mindful of prayers means performing them on time, fulfilling all the necessary conditions and essential parts, focusing on them with proper humility, and doing everything that is obligatory or recommended. Being mindful of prayers leads to being mindful of all acts of worship, and it helps to keep one away from shameful and evil deeds, especially if the prayers are performed properly, as Allah enjoins, standing ﴿before Allah in devotion﴾ that is, in humility and with presence of mind. This is a command to stand up in devotion, in which speaking normally is not allowed. This command to have proper humble focus of mind is applicable in the case of safety and calm.

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But ﴿If you are afraid [of an enemy and the like]﴾. No mention is made of the object of fear, so as to include everything of which one may be afraid, such as disbelievers, evildoers, wild animals and so on. What is meant is: if you are afraid of some harm if you pray in the regular manner, then pray ﴿on foot﴾ that is, walking ﴿or riding﴾ on horses or camels and the like. This implies that this may be done whether one is facing the qibla or not; this further emphasises the importance of offering prayer on time, as this is enjoined even if it means omitting some of the essential parts or conditions, or not doing them. It is not permissible to delay the prayer until after the time for it has ended even in these extreme circumstances. Offering the prayer in that (imperfect) manner is preferable; indeed it is more obligatory than offering the prayer in safety and calmness outside the prescribed time.

﴿but when you are safe again﴾ that is, when the fear has passed ﴿remember Allah﴾ – this includes all kinds of remembrance of Allah, one of which is offering the prayer in the proper manner ﴿for He has taught you what you did not know [before]﴾, which is a great blessing and favour, in return for which you should remember Him and give thanks, so that the blessing will remain and you will be given more.




﴿وَٱلَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَٰجًا وَصِيَّةً لِّأَزْوَٰجِهِم مَّتَٰعًا إِلَى ٱلْحَوْلِ غَيْرَ إِخْرَاجٍ ۚ فَإِنْ خَرَجْنَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِى مَا فَعَلْنَ فِىٓ أَنفُسِهِنَّ مِن مَّعْرُوفٍ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٠﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٤٠)

2:240. Those of you who die and leave widows behind should bequeath for their widows a year's maintenance without them having to leave [their marital homes]. But if they leave their homes [of their own accord], there is no blame on you for what they do with

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themselves, provided it is reasonable. And Allah is Almighty, Most Wise.

That is, husbands who die and leave behind wives must make a will.

﴿should bequeath for their widows a year's maintenance without them having to leave [their marital homes]﴾ that is, they should leave instructions stating that the wives should stay in their houses for one year, and not leave.

﴿But if they leave their homes﴾ by their own choice ﴿there is no blame on you﴾, O guardian ﴿for what they do with themselves, provided it is reasonable. And Allah is Almighty, Most Wise﴾. This refers to them going back to wearing adornment and perfume, and the like. Most of the commentators are of the view that this verse was abrogated by a previous verse, in which Allah says: ﴿If any of you die and leave widows behind, they should refrain from marrying again for four months and ten days﴾ *(2: 234)*. It was also suggested that it was not abrogated; rather the first verse indicates that four months and ten days is obligatory, and anything more than that is recommended and should be done in order to fulfil the husband's right and to take care of the wife's welfare. The evidence that this is recommended is that in this verse it says there is no blame on guardians if the women leave before this year has ended; if it was obligatory for them to stay in the husband's house, it would not say that there is no blame on the guardians in that case.




﴿وَلِلْمُطَلَّقَٰتِ مَتَٰعٌۢ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ ۖ حَقًّا عَلَى ٱلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢٤١﴾ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٤٢﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٤١-٢٤٢)

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2:241. The divorced women should be given something according to what is reasonable. This is a duty incumbent upon the pious.

2:242. In this way Allah makes His revelations clear to you, so that you may understand.

That is, every divorced woman should be given something according to what is reasonable, and this is an obligation upon everyone who is pious, so as to offer compensation to the woman and to fulfil some of her rights. This gift is obligatory for one who divorces his wife before consummation of the marriage, and giving it is sunnah in other cases, as stated above. This is the best opinion concerning this matter. It was also suggested that giving the gift is obligatory in all cases of divorce, based on the general meaning of this verse. However, the basic principle is that what is general in meaning should be understood in the light of what is specific, and we have seen above that the ruling on giving something to the divorced woman applies specifically in the case of divorce before settling the dowry and consummating the marriage.

As Allah (ﷻ) has described these important rulings as being based on wisdom and mercy, He reminds people of His favour by saying: ﴿In this way Allah makes His revelations clear to you﴾ that is, He makes clear His limits, what He permits, what He forbids, and rulings that are beneficial for you, so that you might understand them, recognise them and be aware of the purpose behind them. The one who learns that is obliged to act upon them.

﴿ ۞ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى ٱلَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا۟ مِن دِيَـٰرِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ حَذَرَ ٱلْمَوْتِ فَقَالَ لَهُمُ
ٱللَّهُ مُوتُوا۟ ثُمَّ أَحْيَـٰهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى ٱلنَّاسِ وَلَـٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ ٱلنَّاسِ لَا
يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢٤٣﴾ وَقَـٰتِلُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٤﴾

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مَّن ذَا ٱلَّذِى يُقْرِضُ ٱللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَٰعِفَهُۥ لَهُۥٓ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً ۚ وَٱللَّهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْصُۜطُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٤٥﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٤٣-٢٤٥)

2:243. Have you not seen those who fled their homes in their thousands for fear of death? Then Allah said to them: Die, then He brought them back to life. For Allah is most gracious to humankind, but most of them do not give thanks.

2:244. Fight in the cause of Allah, and know that Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

2:245. Who is he that will lend to Allah a goodly loan, so He will multiply it for him manifold? It is Allah Who withholds and Allah Who gives abundantly, and to Him you will all return.

Here Allah tells us the story of those who left their homes, despite their large numbers and the fact that they all had one motive; what brought them out of their homes was fear of death from an epidemic or some other cause. By leaving, they wanted to save themselves from death, but no precaution could ward off the divine decree.

﴿Then Allah said to them: Die﴾ and they died.

﴿then He brought them back to life﴾, either in response to the prayer of a Prophet or something other than that, out of mercy, kindness and forbearance towards them, and so as to make manifest His signs to His creation by bringing the dead back to life. Hence He says: ﴿For Allah is most gracious to humankind, but most of them do not give thanks﴾, so the blessings do not make them more grateful; rather they use the blessings of Allah to commit sin, and very few of them are grateful and acknowledge the blessings and use them in obedience to the Giver.

Then Allah (ﷻ) enjoins fighting for His sake, which is fighting the disbelieving enemies so that the word of Allah may be supreme and His religion may prevail.

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﴿Fight in the cause of Allah﴾ that is, have good intentions and seek thereby the Countenance of Allah; understand that refraining from fighting will not benefit you at all. If you think that refraining from fighting will save your lives and ensure your survival, that is not the case. Hence Allah mentioned the story quoted above, as an introduction to this command. Just as leaving their homes did not benefit those who left their homes for fear of death, and in fact what they feared came to them in a way they never thought of, then you should realise that you are the same.

Because fighting for the sake of Allah cannot be done except by spending wealth for that purpose, Allah (ﷻ) enjoins and encourages spending for His sake, and He called it a loan.

﴿Who is he that will lend to Allah a goodly loan﴾ and spend whatever he can afford of his wealth on various good causes, especially jihad. What is meant by a goodly loan is that which is earned in a permissible manner and is spent for the sake of Allah.
﴿so He will multiply it for him manifold﴾. The good deed brings a tenfold reward, up to seven hundredfold, up to many times more, according to the intention of the one who gives it, how beneficial it is and how much it is needed. Because people may think that if they spend they will become poor, Allah (ﷻ) wards off this notion by saying ﴿It is Allah Who withholds and Allah Who gives abundantly﴾ that is, He gives abundant provision to whomever He wills and He withholds from whomever He wills. All control is in His Hands and all matters are directed by Him. Withholding wealth does not increase provision and spending it does not decrease it. Moreover, spending is not wasted for those who spend; rather on that day they will find what they sent forward, complete and multiplied abundantly. Hence Allah says: ﴿and to Him you will all return﴾ and He will reward you for your deeds.

These verses indicate that taking measures is of no avail with regard to the divine will and decree, especially measures in which

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one ignores the command of Allah. They also tell us of a great miracle, which was bringing the dead back to life before people's eyes in this world. We also see the command to fight and spend in the cause of Allah, and He tells us the reasons that should encourage us to do that, by calling it a loan and telling us that the reward for it will be multiplied and that Allah is the One Who withholds or gives abundantly, and to Him we will all return.

 

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى ٱلْمَلَإِ مِنۢ بَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مُوسَىٰ إِذْ قَالُوا۟ لِنَبِىٍّ لَّهُمُ ٱبْعَثْ لَنَا مَلِكًا نُّقَٰتِلْ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ قَالَ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِن كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْقِتَالُ أَلَّا تُقَٰتِلُوا۟ ۖ قَالُوا۟ وَمَا لَنَآ أَلَّا نُقَٰتِلَ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَقَدْ أُخْرِجْنَا مِن دِيَٰرِنَا وَأَبْنَآئِنَا ۖ فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا۟ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌۢ بِٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٢٤٦﴾ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا ۚ قَالُوٓا۟ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لَهُ ٱلْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِٱلْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِّنَ ٱلْمَالِ ۚ قَالَ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱصْطَفَىٰهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُۥ بَسْطَةً فِى ٱلْعِلْمِ وَٱلْجِسْمِ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ يُؤْتِى مُلْكَهُۥ مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٧﴾ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ ءَايَةَ مُلْكِهِۦٓ أَن يَأْتِيَكُمُ ٱلتَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ ءَالُ مُوسَىٰ وَءَالُ هَٰرُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ ۚ إِنَّ فِى ذَٰلِكَ لَءَايَةً لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٤٨﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٤٦-٢٤٨)

2:246. Have you not seen the chiefs of the Children of Israel after [the time of] Moosâ? They said to a Prophet of theirs: Appoint for us a king, and we will fight in the cause of Allah. He said: Is it possible that, if fighting was ordained for you, you would not fight? They said: How could we refuse to fight in the cause of Allah, when we have been turned out of our homes and separated

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from our children? But when fighting was ordained for them, they turned away, except a few of them. And Allah is fully aware of the wrongdoers.

2:247. Their Prophet said to them: Allah has appointed Ṭâloot as king over you. They said: How can he be king over us when we are more worthy of kingship than him and he has not been given any measure of wealth? He said: Allah has chosen him over you, and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and physique: Allah grants kingship to whomever He wills, and Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.

2:248. And their Prophet said to them: The sign of his kingship is that there will come to you the Ark of the Covenant, in which there is reassurance from your Lord, and a remnant of that which was left behind by the family of Moosâ and the family of Hâroon, carried by angels. Surely, in that there is a sign for you, if you are believers.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells His Prophet (ﷺ) the story of the chiefs of the Children of Israel, who were the nobles and prominent figures. The chiefs are singled out for mention because they usually discuss their affairs so as to agree on a decision, then others follow them in what they decide. That is because they came to a Prophet of theirs after Moosâ (عليه السلام) and said to him: ﴿Appoint for us a king﴾ that is, choose a king for us, ﴿and we will fight in the cause of Allah﴾ so that we can unite behind him and he could lead us against our enemies. Perhaps at that time they did not have a leader to rally behind, because usually among tribes that are composed of clans, each clan would refuse to accept a leader from another clan. So they asked their Prophet to appoint a king who would be acceptable to all clans, and who would be selected in accordance with their traditions. The Israelite Prophets used to decide concerning their affairs; every time a Prophet died, he was succeeded by another Prophet. When they said that to their Prophet, ﴿He said﴾ to them: ﴿Is it possible

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that, if fighting was ordained for you, you would not fight?﴾ that is, perhaps you are asking for something which, if it is ordained for you, you will not do. Thus he offered them the option of not committing themselves, but they did not accept it; they insisted on what they had decided to do, and said: ﴿How could we refuse to fight in the cause of Allah, when we have been turned out of our homes and separated from our children?﴾ That is, what could keep us from fighting when we are all forced to fight, because we have been expelled from our homes and our children have been taken captive? This is something for which we would have to fight, even if it was not ordained for us, so how about if it is ordained for us after what has happened? But because their intention was not good and they did not have strong trust in their Lord,

﴿when fighting was ordained for them, they turned away﴾; they were too cowardly to fight the enemy and they lost their resolve and forgot about their decision.

Most of them were controlled by weakness and cowardice ﴿except a few of them﴾, whom Allah protected, made steadfast and strengthened their resolve, so they obeyed the command of Allah and started preparing themselves for combat with His enemies. Thus they attained honour in this world and the hereafter. As for the majority, however, they wronged themselves and neglected the command of Allah. Hence Allah says: ﴿And Allah is fully aware of the wrongdoers﴾.

﴿Their Prophet said to them﴾ in response to their request ﴿Allah has appointed Ṭâloot as king over you﴾. He was appointed by Allah, so what they should have done was accept him, submit and not raise objections. But they insisted on raising objections, and said: ﴿How can he be king over us when we are more worthy of kingship than him and he has not been given any measure of wealth?﴾ That is, how can he be a king when he is inferior to us in terms of prominence and lineage, and we are more deserving of kingship than him and,

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moreover, he is poor and does not have enough wealth to enable him to be a king. This was based on the false notion that the prerequisites for kingship and similar positions of authority were noble descent and abundant wealth; they were not aware of the real qualities that qualify a person to take up such a position. Hence their Prophet said to them: ﴿Allah has chosen him over you﴾, and you are obliged to submit to that choice.

﴿and [He] has increased him abundantly in knowledge and physique﴾. That is, He has favoured him over you and given him more in terms of knowledge and physique; in other words, He has given him deep insight and physical strength by means of which he is qualified for his post as king, for if he has deep insight and the ability to implement the right decision, he will be able to fulfil this role in the best manner, but if he were lacking in either of these two qualities, he would not be able to do his job properly. If he were physically strong but lacked deep insight, then the king would be unsuccessful in running the kingdom's affairs, because his strength would not be used in a wise manner. If he had deep insight but did not have the strength to implement any decisions he made, his insight would not benefit him because he would not be able to achieve anything.

﴿and Allah is All-Encompassing﴾ in His grace; for His mercy and kindness are not limited to some in exclusion of others, or to the noble in exclusion of the lowly. Nevertheless, He is

﴿All-Knowing﴾ of who is deserving of His grace, so He bestows it upon him. These words removed any doubt, uncertainty or specious arguments in their hearts, because they explained that Ṭâloot possessed all the qualifications for kingship, and that Allah bestows His grace on whomever He wills among His slaves, and no one can ward it off. Then their Prophet also gave them a tangible sign that they could see for themselves, which was the coming of the Ark of the Covenant, which had been missing for a long time. The Ark contained reassurance which would give them peace of mind, along

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with a remnant of that which was left behind by the family of Moosâ and the family of Hâroon. It was brought to them by the angels who carried it, whilst they were looking on.



﴿فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِٱلْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُم بِنَهَرٍ فَمَن شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَمَن لَّمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُۥ مِنِّيٓ إِلَّا مَنِ ٱغْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةًۢ بِيَدِهِۦ فَشَرِبُوا۟ مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُۥ هُوَ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ مَعَهُۥ قَالُوا۟ لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا ٱلْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِۦ قَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُم مُّلَٰقُوا۟ ٱللَّهِ كَم مِّن فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيرَةًۢ بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ مَعَ ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ ﴿٢٤٩﴾ وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا۟ لِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِۦ قَالُوا۟ رَبَّنَآ أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَٱنصُرْنَا عَلَى ٱلْقَوْمِ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٢٥٠﴾ فَهَزَمُوهُم بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُۥدُ جَالُوتَ وَءَاتَىٰهُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمُلْكَ وَٱلْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُۥ مِمَّا يَشَآءُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ ٱللَّهِ ٱلنَّاسَ بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لَّفَسَدَتِ ٱلْأَرْضُ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٢٥١﴾ تِلْكَ ءَايَٰتُ ٱللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِٱلْحَقِّ ۚ وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ ٱلْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٢٥٢﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٤٩-٢٥٢)

2:249. When Ṭâloot set out with the troops, he said: Allah will test you with a river: whoever drinks from it does not belong with me, but whoever does not drink from it does belong with me; and anyone who scoops up a little with his hand [will be excused]. But they all drank of it, except a few. When they crossed the river, he and those who believed with him, they said: We do not have the strength to face Jâloot and his troops today. But those who were certain that they would meet Allah said: How often has a small group overcome a mighty host by Allah's leave. And Allah is with those who are steadfast.

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2:250. When they came out against Jâloot and his troops, they said: Our Lord, bestow on us steadfastness and make us stand firm; and grant us victory over the disbelieving people.

2:251. Thus they defeated them by Allah's leave; and Dâwood slew Jâloot; and Allah gave him power and wisdom and taught him whatever [else] He willed. Were it not for Allah restraining the people, some by means of others, the earth would indeed be filled with mischief. But Allah is most gracious to all the worlds.

2:252. These are the revelations of Allah, which We recite to you in truth; verily you are one of the Messengers.

When Ṭâloot became king of the Children of Israel, and became established in his position, they made preparations to fight their enemies. When Ṭâloot set out with the Israelite troops, who were huge in number, he tested them, on Allah's command, to show who would be steadfast and assured, and who would not. He said: ﴿Allah will test you with a river: whoever drinks from it does not belong with me﴾ because he is disobedient and cannot follow us because of his lack of patience and steadfastness, and his disobedience.
﴿but whoever does not drink from it does belong with me﴾.
﴿and anyone who scoops up a little with his hand [will be excused]﴾ and there will be no blame on him for that. It may be that Allah will put blessing in it and it will suffice him. This test indicates that the supply of water was little, in order to test them. The majority of them disobeyed him and drank from the river in the manner that was forbidden, and they changed their minds about fighting their enemies. Their lack of patience in refraining from the water for a short while offered the greatest evidence that they had no patience for the fight which would be lengthy and would involve a great deal of hardship. Their turning back from the rest of the army increased the trust in Allah of those who remained steadfast, and made them more earnest in beseeching Him, humbling themselves before Him and declaring

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the stories that Allah has told him about previous nations, and the Prophets and their followers and enemies; if Allah did not tell him about that, he would have no knowledge of it; in fact there was no one among his people who had any knowledge of these matters. This indicates that he is indeed the Messenger of Allah and His true Prophet (ﷺ), whom He sent with truth and with the religion of truth, so that it might prevail over all religions, even if the polytheists dislike that.

This story contains signs and wonders that serve as a reminder to people of understanding. They include the following:

- For the decision-makers to be united and to examine different options before choosing the best and acting upon it is the greatest means of advancing and attaining their goals, as happened in the case of these chiefs when they consulted their Prophet about appointing a king whom they could rally behind and bring their scattered community together, and they would obey him.
- The more the truth is challenged and specious arguments are produced against it, the clearer and more distinct it becomes and the more certainty can be attained thereby, as happened in the case of these people when they objected to the appointment of Ṭâloot as their king. They were given answers by means of which they became convinced and all doubts and specious arguments were dispelled.
- Knowledge and insight combined with the power to implement decisions are two qualities which together lead to perfect performance in positions of authority. However, lacking one or both of them will damage a leader's performance.
- Relying on oneself is a cause of failure and being forsaken by Allah, whereas seeking the help of Allah with patience and turning to Him is a cause of victory. The former is reflected in their words to their Prophet: ﴿How could we refuse to fight in the cause of Allah, when we have been turned out of our homes and separated from our children?﴾ *(2: 246)*; it was as if that was

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the reason why, when fighting was ordained for them, they turned away. The latter is reflected in the words: ﴿When they came out against Jâloot and his troops, they said: Our Lord, bestow on us steadfastness and make us stand firm; and grant us victory over the disbelieving people. Thus they defeated them by Allah's leave...﴾ *(2: 250-251).*

- The wisdom of Allah (ﷻ) dictates that evil be distinct from good, true be distinct from false, and patience be distinct from cowardice. He would not have left the people as they were, mixed and not distinct from one another.
- By His mercy and according to His way, He restrains the harm caused by disbelievers and hypocrites by means of believers who fight. Were it not for that, the world would be filled with mischief when it was overtaken by disbelief and its symbols.




﴿ تِلْكَ ٱلرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ مِّنْهُم مَّن كَلَّمَ ٱللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَٰتٍ ۚ وَءَاتَيْنَا عِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ وَأَيَّدْنَٰهُ بِرُوحِ ٱلْقُدُسِ ۗ وَلَوْ شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ مَا ٱقْتَتَلَ ٱلَّذِينَ مِنۢ بَعْدِهِم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَتْهُمُ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتُ وَلَٰكِنِ ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فَمِنْهُم مَّنْ ءَامَنَ وَمِنْهُم مَّن كَفَرَ ۚ وَلَوْ شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ مَا ٱقْتَتَلُوا۟ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴿٢٥٣﴾ ﴾

(سورة البقرة: ٢٥٣)

2:253. Those Messengers: We favoured some above others. There are some to whom Allah spoke directly; others He raised in rank; to 'Eesâ the son of Maryam We gave clear signs and supported him with the Pure Spirit. If Allah had so willed, those who came after them would not have fought one another after clear signs had come to them, but they disagreed among themselves, some believing and others disbelieving. If Allah had so willed, they

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would not have fought one another; but Allah does whatever He wills.

Here, Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He favoured some of the Messengers over others, in that He singled them out from among all people to receive His revelation, to be sent to the people and to call them to Allah. Then He favoured some of them over others in terms of what He bestowed upon them of praiseworthy characteristics and righteous deeds, and in terms of what they brought of benefits to people. Some of them Allah spoke to directly, as in the case of Moosâ ibn 'Imrân, whom He singled out to speak to directly. Some of them He raised above others in status, such as our Prophet (ﷺ), in whom were combined all the qualities that were scattered among other Prophets; Allah combined in him all the virtues by means of which he superseded the first and the last.

﴿to 'Eesâ the son of Maryam We gave clear signs﴾ that pointed to his prophethood and confirmed that he was the slave of Allah, His Messenger, His word that he bestowed upon Maryam, and a spirit created by Him.

﴿and supported him with the Pure Spirit﴾ that is, with faith and certainty with which Allah supported him and gave him the strength to do what He commanded him to do. It was also said that what is meant is that He supported him with Jibreel (عليه السلام), who stayed with him constantly.

﴿If Allah had so willed, those who came after them would not have fought one another after clear signs had come to them﴾, because the signs should bring about unity in faith

﴿but they disagreed among themselves, some believing and others disbelieving﴾. These differences resulted in division, enmity and fighting, yet despite that, if Allah had so willed, after they had these differences, they would not have fought. This indicates that the will of Allah always comes to pass and defeats all measures; rather measures may only be of benefit if they are not contrary to the divine will. If

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the divine will is there, all measures aimed at achieving the opposite will be diminished. Hence Allah says: ﴿but Allah does whatever He wills﴾. Thus His will always prevails and comes to pass. This and similar verses indicate that Allah (ﷻ) always does what is dictated by His will and wisdom; among the things He does are those that He has told us of Himself, or that His Messenger (ﷺ) has told us of, such as rising above, descending, speaking and other actions that He may or may not do.

Note: Just as the believer is required to know about his Lord, he is also required to know about His Messengers, their essential characteristics, and what is and is not appropriate for them. All of these qualities may be understood from the description that Allah has given of them in numerous verses. For example, they are men, not women, and they are townspeople, not desert dwellers; they are chosen and selected; Allah has instilled in them all praiseworthy characteristics because of which they are qualified to be chosen and selected; they are free of any faults that could undermine their mission as Messengers, such as lying, treachery, concealing knowledge and other faults that would undermine their position; any errors they may make with regard to the message are not condoned (rather they are corrected); and Allah has chosen them to receive His revelation. Hence we must believe in them and obey them; anyone who does not believe in them is a disbeliever, and anyone who criticises or reviles any one of them becomes a disbeliever who has gone beyond the pale of Islam and may be subject to capital punishment. There is a great deal of evidence for what has been mentioned above; whoever ponders the Qur'an, the truth will become clear to him.

 

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَنفِقُواْ مِمَّا رَزَقۡنَٰكُم مِّن قَبۡلِ أَن يَأۡتِيَ يَوۡمٞ لَّا بَيۡعٞ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٞ وَلَا شَفَٰعَةٞۗ وَٱلۡكَٰفِرُونَ هُمُ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ ٢٥٤ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٥٤)

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2:254. O you who believe, spend from that which We have provided for you, before the day comes when there will be no bargaining, no friendship, and no intercession. It is the disbelievers who are the wrongdoers.

By His kindness towards His slaves, Allah commands them to give some of that which He has provided them with, in the form of obligatory or recommended charity, so that it may be stored up as abundant reward for a day when those who strive hard will need every last little good deed, and when there will be no room for bargaining, and if a person were to offer an earthful of gold to ransom himself from punishment on the Day of Resurrection, it would not be accepted from him, and no friend, no status and no intercession will benefit him. That is the day on which the followers of falsehood will be losers and the wrongdoers will be disgraced; they are the ones who acted inappropriately, failing to fulfil their obligations towards Allah and towards His slaves, and who transgressed the limits of what is permissible, seeking that which is forbidden. The worst type of wrongdoing is disbelief in Allah, Who is the only One Who should be worshipped, but the disbeliever directed his worship to a created being like himself. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿It is the disbelievers who are the wrongdoers﴾ that is, they are the ones who are proven to be wrongdoers in the fullest sense of the word, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿...for associating others in worship with Him is indeed grievous wrongdoing.﴾ *(Luqmân 31: 13)*




﴿ٱللَّهُ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ٱلْحَىُّ ٱلْقَيُّومُ ۚ لَا تَأْخُذُهُۥ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ ۚ لَّهُۥ مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۗ مَن ذَا ٱلَّذِى يَشْفَعُ عِندَهُۥٓ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِۦ ۚ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ ۖ وَلَا

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يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِۦٓ إِلَّا بِمَا شَآءَ ۚ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ ۖ وَلَا يَـُٔودُهُۥ حِفْظُهُمَا ۚ وَهُوَ ٱلْعَلِىُّ ٱلْعَظِيمُ ﴿٢٥٥﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٥٥)

2:255. Allah: there is no god but He, the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining and All-Sustaining. Neither slumber nor sleep overtake Him. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth. Who is there that can intercede with Him except by His leave? He knows what was before them and what will be after them, while they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He wills. His *Kursi*[18] extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of both does not weary Him, for He is the Most High, the Most Great.

This verse is the greatest, best and most sublime verse in the Qur'an, because of what it points to of important matters and divine attributes. Hence there are many hadiths that recommend reciting it regularly at different times, morning and evening, when going to sleep and following the prescribed prayers. In it, Allah tells us about Himself that ﴿there is no god but He﴾ that is, there is none deserving of worship except Him, for He is the true God to Whom all types of worship, obedience and devotion should be directed, because of His perfection, the perfection of His attributes and His great blessings. And it is befitting that the human being should be a slave to his Lord, following His commands and heeding His prohibitions. Everything other than Allah (ﷻ) is false and worship of anything other than Him is false, because everything other than Allah is created, imperfect, under His control and dependent (on Him) in all ways, so it does not deserve to be worshipped in any way.

[18] The Kursi is the footstool of the Most Merciful, according to the most correct scholarly opinion. It is something other than the 'Arsh (Throne), which is the greatest of all things that Allah has created, over which our Lord rose in a manner that befits His Majesty.

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﴿the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining and All-Sustaining﴾ these two divine names inherently imply all the other divine names. The Ever-Living (al-Ḥayy) is the One Who has perfect life, which implies all attributes of His essence, such as hearing, sight, knowledge, power, and so on. The Self-Sustaining and All-Sustaining (al-Qayyoom) is the One Who is self-sustaining and Whom others need to exist. This implies all the actions of the Lord of the worlds, Who does whatever He wills of rising above, descending, speaking, creating, granting provision, giving life and death, and all types of control. All of that is included in the concept that He is Self-Sustaining and the Sustainer of others. Hence some of the scholars said that these two are the greatest names to which, if Allah is called upon by them, He will respond, and if He is asked by them, He will give. The perfect nature of His being Ever-Living, Self-Sustaining and All-Sustaining means that ﴿Neither slumber nor sleep overtake Him﴾. The word translated here as ﴿slumber﴾ implies drowsiness.

﴿To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth﴾ that is, He is the Sovereign, and everything other than Him belongs to Him. He is the Creator, the Provider, the Controller, and everything other than Him is created, provided for and controlled; it does not possess for itself or for anyone else the weight of an atom in the heavens or on earth. Hence Allah says: ﴿Who is there that can intercede with Him except by His leave?﴾ That is, no one can intercede with Him without His permission. All intercession belongs to Allah (ﷻ), but when He wants to show mercy to whomever He will among His slaves, He gives permission to whomever He wants to honour among His slaves to intercede for him. The intercessor does not initiate intercession before permission is given.

﴿He knows what was before them﴾ that is, what is past of all things ﴿and what will be after them﴾ that is, what lies ahead in the future. His knowledge encompasses all details, past and future, apparent and hidden, seen and unseen. People have no control over their affairs at

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all, and they do not have the slightest knowledge except that which He has taught them. Hence He says: ﴿while they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He wills﴾.

﴿His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth﴾. This is indicative of His perfect might and all-encompassing power, as the Kursi encompasses the heavens and the earth, despite their vastness and the greatness of what they contain. The Kursi, however, is not the greatest of Allah's creation; rather there is something that is greater than it, namely the Throne *al-'Arsh* and that which no one knows except Him. The greatness of these creations dazzles the mind and is beyond comprehension; it causes the mountains to crumble and cannot be grasped by even the most brilliant of human minds. So how about the greatness of their Creator and Initiator, Who instilled in them many wonders and mysteries that point to His great wisdom, the One Who keeps a firm hold on the heavens and the earth, lest they fall apart *(cf. 35: 41)*, without becoming tired or weary? Hence He says ﴿and the preservation of both does not weary Him﴾ that is, it is not burdensome for Him.
﴿for He is the Most High﴾ in and of Himself, above His Throne; He is the Most High in the sense that He is the Subduer of all His creation, the Most High in status, because of the perfection of His attributes. ﴿the Most Great﴾; the might of tyrants appears insignificant when compared with His greatness, and the status of powerful kings appears small when compared with His Majesty. Glory be to the One Who is possessed of great power and might over all things.

This verse refers to the oneness of divinity (tawḥeed al-uloohiyah), the oneness of the divine Lordship (tawḥeed ar-ruboobiyah) and the oneness of the divine names and attributes (tawḥeed al-asmâ' waṣ-ṣifât). It also refers to His all-encompassing sovereignty and knowledge, and to the greatness of His power, majesty, glory, might and pride, and His exaltedness above all His creation. This verse on its own highlights belief in the names and attributes of Allah, and implies all the beautiful names and sublime attributes of Allah.

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﴿لَآ إِكْرَاهَ فِي ٱلدِّينِ ۖ قَد تَّبَيَّنَ ٱلرُّشْدُ مِنَ ٱلْغَيِّ ۚ فَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِٱلطَّٰغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنۢ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدِ ٱسْتَمْسَكَ بِٱلْعُرْوَةِ ٱلْوُثْقَىٰ لَا ٱنفِصَامَ لَهَا ۗ وَٱللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥٦﴾ ٱللَّهُ وَلِيُّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ ٱلظُّلُمَٰتِ إِلَى ٱلنُّورِ ۖ وَٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوٓا۟ أَوْلِيَآؤُهُمُ ٱلطَّٰغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ ٱلنُّورِ إِلَى ٱلظُّلُمَٰتِ ۗ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلنَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿٢٥٧﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٥٦-٢٥٧)

2:256. Let there be no compulsion in religion; truth stands out clear from error. Whoever rejects *ṭâghoot*[19] and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold that never breaks. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

2:257. Allah is the Protector of those who believe; from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light. As for those who disbelieve, their protectors are ṭâghoot; from light they will lead them forth into the depths of darkness. They will be inhabitants of the fire, to abide therein forever.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that there should be no compulsion in religion because there is no need to compel anyone to believe in it. Compulsion can only be in matters that are ambiguous and unclear, for which there is no proof or evidence, or for matters to which people have a natural aversion. As for this true religion and straight path, it is very clear to those who are possessed of reason and is based on clear evidence. Truth stands out clear from error, so if one who is fortunate looks at it briefly, he will choose it, whereas the one who has ulterior motives, bad intentions and evil inclinations will see the truth yet will prefer falsehood to it; he will see what is beautiful but will choose that which is ugly. Allah has no need to compel such a person to follow

[19] Ṭâghoot: false gods, devils, soothsayers, leaders of misguidance – anyone and anything that diverts people from worship of Allah.

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this religion, because there is no benefit in doing so; the faith of one who is forced to believe is not valid. However, this verse does not indicate that we should give up fighting the disbelievers who are in a state of war with Islam; rather it indicates that the beautiful nature of this religion would make any fair-minded person feel inclined towards it. As for the issue of fighting or not fighting, that is not the issue here; rather the obligation of fighting is learned from other texts. What we learn from this verse is that jizyah may be accepted from people other than the People of the Book, as is the view of many scholars.

Whoever rejects ṭâghoot and gives up worshipping anything other than Allah and obeying the Shayṭân, and believes in Allah in a complete sense that leads to worshipping and obeying his Lord ﴿has grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold﴾ that is, the true religion, the foundations of the pillars of which are well established; the one who adheres to it will be sure of what he is doing, because he is adhering to the most trustworthy hand-hold ﴿that never breaks﴾. As for the one who does the opposite, he has disbelieved in Allah and has believed in ṭâghoot, thus letting go of this trustworthy hand-hold in which is protection and salvation, and he has adhered to every falsehood that will lead him to hell.

﴿And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing﴾ and He will requite each according to his deeds, good or bad; that is the ultimate fate of the one who grasps the most trustworthy hand-hold and the one who does not.

Then Allah mentions the means of attaining that: ﴿Allah is the Protector of those who believe﴾. This is because of their sincerity towards their Lord, as they have taken Him as a friend and they do not seek any alternative to Him or associate anyone with Him. They have chosen Him as the Beloved and Protector, and they have taken His close friends as their friends and His enemies as their enemies. Thus He protects them by His grace and bestows blessings upon them by His kindness; He brings them forth from the darkness of disbelief, sin and ignorance to the light of faith, obedience and knowledge.

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Their reward for that is that He grants them safety from the darkness of the grave, the gathering and the resurrection and blesses them with eternal bliss, comfort, ease and happiness.

﴿As for those who disbelieve, their protectors are ṭâghoot﴾; they have taken the Shayṭân and his troops as friends, instead of Allah; they have taken Shayṭân as a friend instead of their Lord. So Allah has given the Shayṭân and his troops power over them, as a punishment to them; thus they incited them to commit sins and evil actions, and they brought them forth from the light of faith, knowledge and obedience to the darkness of disbelief, ignorance and sin. Their punishment for that was to be deprived of good things and to miss out on delights, joys and pleasures. They will be with the Shayṭân and his friends, suffering regret in the hereafter. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿They will be inhabitants of the fire, to abide therein forever﴾.

﴿ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى ٱلَّذِى حَآجَّ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ فِى رَبِّهِۦٓ أَنْ ءَاتَىٰهُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمُ رَبِّىَ ٱلَّذِى يُحْىِۦ وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا۠ أُحْىِۦ وَأُمِيتُ ۖ قَالَ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمُ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَأْتِى بِٱلشَّمْسِ مِنَ ٱلْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ ٱلْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ ٱلَّذِى كَفَرَ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِى ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٢٥٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٥٨)

2:258. Have you not seen the one who argued with Ibrâheem about his Lord. as Allah had granted him kingship? Ibrâheem said: My Lord is He Who gives life and death. He said: I give life and death. Ibrâheem said: But it is Allah Who brings the sun from the east; so bring it from the west [if you can]. Thus the one who disbelieved was dumbfounded. Allah does not guide wrongdoing people.

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﴿Have you not seen the one who argued with Ibrâheem about his Lord﴾ that is, have you not seen his audacity, ignorant behaviour, stubbornness and arguing about that concerning which there can be no doubt? Nothing made him do that except the fact that ﴿Allah had granted him kingship﴾, so he transgressed and thought that he was in control of his subjects. That prompted him to argue with Ibrâheem about the Lordship of Allah, and he claimed that he could do what Allah does. Ibrâheem said: ﴿My Lord is He Who gives life and death﴾ that is, He is the only One Who has full control. He singled out the giving of life and death for mention because they are the greatest levels of control. Giving life is the beginning of life in this world, and giving death is the starting point for the events of the hereafter. The one who was arguing with him said: ﴿I give life and death﴾, but he did not say: I am the one who gives life and death, because he did not claim to be independent of Allah or to have full control; rather he was claiming to do what He does and to control as He controls. He claimed that he could kill someone, thus having given him death, or he could let someone live, thus having given him life. When Ibrâheem saw the flaws in his argument and heard him say something that is not fit to cause doubt, let alone be proof for his argument, he ignored his argument and went on to say:

﴿But it is Allah Who brings the sun from the east﴾ that is, he referred to something visible that everyone acknowledges, even that disbeliever. ﴿so bring it from the west [if you can]﴾. Here he was going along with his argument, if he was really telling the truth as he claimed. When Ibrâheem presented to him an argument that he could not counter, ﴿Thus the one who disbelieved was dumbfounded﴾ that is, he was confounded and could not give an answer; thus his argument was defeated and was proven to be specious and flawed. This is the state of the stubborn defender of falsehood who wants to wrestle with the truth and fight it; he will be defeated and subdued. Hence Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿Allah does not guide wrongdoing people﴾; rather He leaves

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them in their disbelief and misguidance. They are the ones who chose that for themselves, otherwise if they were really seeking the truth and guidance, He would have guided them to it and made it easy for them to reach it. This verse offers definitive proof that Allah is the only One Who can create and control, therefore He is the only One Whom people should worship, turn to, and put their trust in, in all situations. Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

> In this debate there is a very subtle point, which is that the foundation of polytheism in all people goes back to worship of heavenly bodies and graves; then idols were made to represent them. Thus the two points of evidence produced by Ibrâheem to highlight the falseness of other gods is summed up in one sentence, which states that Allah alone is the one who gives life and death, and that the living being that will die cannot be regarded as divine, either during life or after death. That living being has an all-powerful Lord Who subdues and controls all, and Who gives life and death. How can one who is like that be a god in whose image idols are made and who is worshipped instead of Allah? By the same token, the heavenly bodies, the brightest and biggest of which is the sun, also have a Lord and are controlled by and subjugated to Him. They have no control over themselves at all; rather their Lord and Creator brings them from the east, so they yield to His command and will, and are subjugated and are under control. There is no God to be worshipped except Allah.[20]

﴿ أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَىٰ قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّىٰ يُحْيِي هَٰذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۖ فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ ۖ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ ۖ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ ۖ قَالَ

[20] Ibn al-Qayyim, *Miftâh Dâr as-Sa'âdah*.

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بَل لَّبِثْتَ مِائَةَ عَامٍ فَانظُرْ إِلَىٰ طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ ۖ وَانظُرْ إِلَىٰ
حِمَارِكَ وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِّلنَّاسِ ۖ وَانظُرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنشِزُهَا
ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لَحْمًا ۚ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

﴿٢٥٩﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٥٩)

2:259. Or [have you seen] the one who passed by a town that lay in ruins? He said: How can Allah restore this to life when it has died? Then Allah caused him to die for a hundred years, then brought him back to life. He said: How long did you remain [in this state]? He said: [Perhaps] a day or part of a day. He said: No; you remained [like this] for a hundred years. Look at your food and your drink; they have not changed. But look at your donkey, so that We may make of you a sign unto the people; look at the bones, [and see] how We bring them together then clothe them with flesh. When it had all become clear to him, he said: I know that Allah has power over all things.

This is another sign that points to the fact that Allah is the only Creator, controller and Giver of life and death.

﴿Or [have you seen] the one who passed by a town that lay in ruins?﴾ That is, its people had vanished, its inhabitants had died out, and the walls and ceilings of its buildings had collapsed. There was no sign of life left in it; rather it was desolate and devoid of its people. This man who came across it wondered: ﴿How can Allah restore this to life when it has died?﴾. He thought that such a thing was very unlikely, and he was unaware of the power of Allah (ﷻ). But because Allah willed good for him, He showed him a sign in himself and in his donkey, and in the food and drink that he had with him.

﴿Then Allah caused him to die for a hundred years, then brought him back to life. He said: How long did you remain [in this state]? He said: [Perhaps] a day or part of a day﴾. He thought that the time for

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which he had died was very short, because he had not been conscious. Then it was said to him:

﴿No; you remained [like this] for a hundred years. Look at your food and your drink; they have not changed﴾ that is, they remained as they had been, despite the passage of time. This was a great sign of Allah's power, as He kept the food and drink as they had been, and protected them from changing or spoiling, because food and drink are among the quickest of things to spoil.

﴿But look at your donkey﴾, which had died, its flesh and skin had disintegrated and its bones had become scattered

﴿so that We may make of you a sign unto the people﴾ of the power of Allah and His ability to resurrect the dead from their graves, so that this would be a tangible example that you could see with your own eyes, and so that people may know thereby that what the Messengers said is true.

﴿look at the bones, [and see] how We bring them together then clothe them with flesh﴾ – and he saw it with his own eyes as Allah (ﷻ) had described it.

﴿When it had all become clear to him﴾ and he became aware of the power of Allah

﴿he said: I know that Allah has power over all things﴾. The apparent meaning from the context of the verse is that this was a man who did not believe in the resurrection, and Allah willed good for him, wanting to make him a sign for people in three ways:

1- The man said: ﴿How can Allah restore this to life when it has died?﴾ If he had been a Prophet or a righteous slave, he would not have said that.

2- Allah showed him a sign in his food and drink, and in his donkey and in himself, so that he could see it with his own eyes and affirm what he had denied. The verse does not say that the town mentioned was rebuilt and restored to its former state; there is nothing in the context to indicate that, and there would not be

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much benefit in it. What benefit would there be in bringing the dead back to life in a ruined town, then its people would return to it or other people would come and rebuild it? Rather the real proof is in bringing him and his donkey back to life, and preserving his food and drink as they were.

3- Allah says: ﴿When it had all become clear to him﴾ that is, when something that he had not known and that had been hidden from him became clear to him. Thus it is known that what we said is correct. And Allah knows best.




﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِى كَيْفَ تُحْىِ ٱلْمَوْتَىٰ ۖ قَالَ أَوَلَمْ تُؤْمِن ۖ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِى ۖ قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ ٱلطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ ٱجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ٱدْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا ۚ وَٱعْلَمْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٠﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٦٠)

2:260. When Ibrâheem said: Show me, O Lord, how You will raise the dead, He replied: Do you not believe then? [Ibrâheem] said: Yes of course, but just to reassure my heart. [Allah] said: So take four birds and cut their bodies into pieces, then place a piece of each of them on each hill. Then call them; they will come swiftly to you. Know that Allah is Almighty, Most Wise.

This is also tangible evidence of the power of Allah and how He will bring the dead back to life in order to requite them. Allah (ﷻ) tells us that His close friend Ibrâheem asked Him to show him before his own eyes how he would bring the dead back to life. He was certain of that, because Allah (ﷻ) had told him of it, but he wanted to see it with his own eyes, so that he might attain the certainty of seeing it with his own eyes. Hence Allah said to him: ﴿Do you not

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believe then? [Ibrâheem] said: Yes of course, but just to reassure my heart﴾. That was because seeing further certain evidence is one of the things by which faith increases and certainty becomes complete. This is what those who want to draw closer to Allah try to attain. So his Lord said to him: ﴿So take four birds and cut their bodies into pieces, then place a piece of each of them on each hill﴾ that is, cut them into pieces, mix the parts and place on each hill – of some hills that were nearby – one of those pieces.

﴿Then call them; they will come swiftly to you﴾ that is, they will be brought back to life in a complete sense, and they will come quickly to you, as birds do. So Ibrâheem (عليه السلام) did that, and what he wanted happened. This is part of Allah's mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth, which He showed him, as He says:

﴿Thus We gave Ibrâheem an insight into [Allah's] mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth, so that he might be one of those who have certain faith.﴾ *(al-An'âm 6: 75)*

﴿Know that Allah is Almighty, Most Wise﴾ that is, He has great power by which He has subjugated all created things, so nothing is outside His control; rather everything submits to His might and majesty. Nevertheless, His actions are in accordance with His wisdom, and He does not do anything for no purpose.




﴿مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَٰلَهُمْ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلَ فِى كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٍ مِّا۟ئَةُ حَبَّةٍ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦١﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٦١)

2:261. The likeness of those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah is that of a grain of corn that produces seven ears, each ear bearing a hundred grains. Allah gives manifold increase

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to whomever He wills. And Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.

This is an explanation of the multiplication of reward mentioned previously: ﴿Who is he that will lend to Allah a goodly loan, so He will multiply it for him manifold?﴾ *(2: 245)*. Here Allah says: ﴿The likeness of those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah﴾ that is, they spend it in obedience to Him, seeking His pleasure. The most important kind of spending is spending on jihad for His sake.

﴿is that of a grain of corn that produces seven ears, each ear bearing a hundred grains﴾. What is meant by this example is to give a likeness of that multiplication, so that a person may form a mental picture of it, by means of which his faith will be strengthened and he will be motivated to spend in the hope of attaining that multiplied reward and great blessing.

﴿Allah gives manifold increase﴾ which is this multiplication of reward ﴿to whomever He wills﴾ that is, according to the giver's condition and level of sincerity, and how beneficial and appropriate the spending is. And it may be that Allah will multiply the reward even further for ﴿whomever He wills﴾, giving without limit.

﴿And Allah is All-Encompassing﴾ in His generosity, so He gives abundantly and His giving does not deplete what He has. No one who spends (for His sake) should think that this multiplication of reward is a kind of exaggeration, because nothing is too much for Allah (ﷻ), and this giving does not decrease His resources, no matter how great it is. At the same time He is ﴿All-Knowing﴾; He knows who is deserving of that multiplied reward and who is not, so He multiplies appropriately in accordance with His perfect knowledge and wisdom.

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﴿ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَٰلَهُمْ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتْبِعُونَ مَآ أَنفَقُوا۟ مَنًّا وَلَآ أَذًى ۙ لَّهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٦٢﴾ قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّن صَدَقَةٍ يَتْبَعُهَآ أَذًى ۗ وَٱللَّهُ غَنِىٌّ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٣﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٦٢-٢٦٣)

2:262. Those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah, and do not follow their spending with reminders of their generosity or hurtful words, for them their reward is with their Lord: they will have no fear, nor will they grieve.

2:263. Kind words and forgiveness are better than charity followed by hurtful [words]. Allah is Self-Sufficient, Most Forbearing.

That is, those who spend their wealth in obedience to Allah and in His cause, and do not follow that with things that may detract from it or spoil it, such as reminders to the recipient by recounting his favour either in his own mind or verbally, demanding something in return, or hurtful words or actions. Such people will have a suitable reward, and they will have no fear, nor will they grieve. Thus they will attain good and evil will be warded off from them, because they did something sincerely for the sake of Allah, free of anything that would spoil it.

﴿Kind words﴾ that is, words that are acceptable and not objectionable. That includes any kind words that make a Muslim feel happy, such as speaking gently when having to turn away a beggar, and praying for him.

﴿and forgiveness﴾ towards one who mistreats you, by not blaming him and by pardoning him. That includes pardoning what the beggar may say of offensive words (when you turn him away). Kind words and forgiveness are better than charity that is followed by hurtful words, because kind words come under the heading of verbal kindness, and

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forgiveness is also an act of kindness because you are not blaming him. Both actions are kindness in which there is nothing that may spoil it, so they are both better than a kind charitable act that is followed by hurtful reminders and the like. What the verse means is that charity that is not followed by hurtful words or actions is better than kind words and forgiveness; rather it is reminding of charity that spoils it and it is forbidden, because only Allah (ﷻ) can remind of favours and all blessings come from Him. Hence the individual should not remind others of something that came about as a result of Allah's kindness and grace, and did not come from him. Moreover, reminding another of one's favour is like enslaving him, but humbleness and servitude are only befitting if directed towards Allah. Allah has no need of His creation, but all of them need Him in all circumstances and at all times. So the benefit of your charity, spending and worship comes back to you. ﴿Allah is Self-Sufficient﴾ and has no need of it. Despite all that, He is ﴿Most Forbearing﴾ towards the one who disobeys Him. He does not hasten to punish him even though He is able to do so; His mercy, kindness and forbearance prevent Him from hastening to punish those who disobey Him. Rather He gives respite and explains the signs to them in various ways, so that they might return to Him and repent. But once He knows that there is nothing good in them, and that the signs will not benefit them, and they have not learnt from previous exemplary punishments, then He will send the punishment down upon them and deprive them of His great reward.




﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تُبۡطِلُواْ صَدَقَٰتِكُم بِٱلۡمَنِّ وَٱلۡأَذَىٰ كَٱلَّذِي يُنفِقُ مَالَهُۥ رِئَآءَ ٱلنَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤۡمِنُ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِۖ فَمَثَلُهُۥ كَمَثَلِ صَفۡوَانٍ عَلَيۡهِ تُرَابٞ فَأَصَابَهُۥ وَابِلٞ فَتَرَكَهُۥ صَلۡدٗاۖ لَّا يَقۡدِرُونَ عَلَىٰ شَيۡءٖ مِّمَّا كَسَبُواْۗ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يَهۡدِي ٱلۡقَوۡمَ ٱلۡكَٰفِرِينَ ٢٦٤ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٦٤)

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2:264. O you who believe, do not nullify your acts of charity with reminders and hurtful words, like the one who spends his wealth to show off before people, but believes neither in Allah nor in the Last Day. His likeness is that of a smooth rock, on which there is a little soil; when heavy rain falls it leaves it completely bare. They will gain nothing from their efforts. And Allah does not guide the disbelieving people.

Here Allah forbids His slaves, out of kindness and mercy towards them, to nullify their charity with hurtful reminders. This shows us that hurtful reminders nullify charity, and may be taken as evidence that bad deeds nullify good deeds, as Allah says elsewhere:

﴿...and do not speak loudly to him [the Prophet] as you speak loudly to one another, lest your deeds come to nothing without your realising it.﴾ *(al-Hujurât 49: 2)*

Just as good deeds erase bad deeds, bad deeds nullify preceding good deeds. This verse, along with the verse:

﴿O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and do not let your deeds go in vain.﴾ *(Muhammad 47: 33)*

– encourages us to perfect our deeds and protect them from anything that may nullify them, lest the deeds go to waste.
﴿like the one who spends his wealth to show off before people, but believes neither in Allah nor in the Last Day﴾ that is, even though you may initially be doing it for the sake of Allah, reminders and hurtful words render your deeds invalid, thus your deeds become like those of the one who does things in order to show off to people, and he is not seeking Allah and the hereafter thereby. The deeds of such a person are undoubtedly rejected from the outset, because a condition of deeds being acceptable is that they should be for the sake of Allah alone. This person is in fact doing things for people, not for Allah, so his deeds are invalid and his efforts are not appreciated. The exact likeness of such a person ﴿is that of a smooth rock, on which there is a little soil;

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when heavy rain falls it leaves it completely bare﴾ that is, with no soil on it. This is the situation of the show-off: his heart is as hard as a rock, and his charity and other deeds are like the soil on the rock. If an ignorant person sees it as it is, he thinks that it is fertile land where plants could grow; then when he shows his true colours, the soil will be gone and his deeds will become like a mirage. His heart is (like a rock) that is not suitable for cultivation; rather his showing off and evil intentions prevent him from benefiting from any of his deeds. Hence ﴿They will gain nothing from their efforts﴾ that is, from the deeds that they did, because their intentions were inappropriate and they did these deeds for people like themselves who do not have the power to cause them any harm or bring them any benefit, and they turned away from worshipping the One of Whom worship could be of benefit. So Allah turned their hearts away from guidance, hence He says: ﴿And Allah does not guide the disbelieving people﴾.

 

﴿وَمَثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَٰلَهُمُ ٱبْتِغَآءَ مَرْضَاتِ ٱللَّهِ وَتَثْبِيتًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ جَنَّةٍۭ بِرَبْوَةٍ أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ فَـَٔاتَتْ أُكُلَهَا ضِعْفَيْنِ فَإِن لَّمْ يُصِبْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطَلٌّ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٦٥﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٦٥)

2:265. And the likeness of those who spend their wealth, seeking Allah's pleasure and out of their own inner certainty, is that of a garden on high ground; if heavy rain falls on it, it makes it yield a double increase of harvest, and if it does not receive heavy rain, then a light drizzle suffices it. Allah sees all that you do.

This is the likeness of those who spend their wealth in such a way that their spending will be rewarded and their charity will be accepted.

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﴿And the likeness of those who spend their wealth, seeking Allah's pleasure﴾ that is, seeking thereby to attain the pleasure of their Lord and closeness to Him

﴿and out of their own inner certainty﴾ that is, they are happy with what they are doing, with no hesitancy or lack of resolve in giving. Two problems may be encountered with regard to spending: either the individual may seek to win praise from people when doing it, which is showing off, or he may spend reluctantly, with a lack of resolve and with hesitation. But the people referred to in this verse are free of these two problems; they spend seeking Allah's pleasure and not for any other purpose, out of their own inner certainty. The likeness of their spending ﴿is that of a garden﴾ with lots of trees and shade covering what is in it. This garden is ﴿on high ground﴾ that is, an elevated area that is open to the sun from the beginning of the day until the end, so its fruits are more abundant and beautiful. It is not on low ground, shielded from the wind and sun.

﴿If heavy rain falls on it﴾ that is, this garden that is on high ground, ﴿it makes it yield a double increase of harvest﴾ that is, its fruits multiply because of the goodness of the ground and for other reasons that lead to this outcome. The availability of plentiful water makes it grow and reach maturity.

﴿and if it does not receive heavy rain, then a light drizzle﴾ that is, light rain is sufficient, because of the fertility of the place where it grows. This is the likeness of those who spend a large or small amount, each according to his means; what he spends grows and multiplies until it reaches fullness. The One Who causes it to grow is more merciful to you than you are to yourself; He cares about you when you are not paying attention. If it so happened that such a garden existed in this world, people would rush to acquire it and there would be great competition for it, which would lead to conflict, even though this world is transient and will end, and it is the realm of hardship, stress and problems. It is as if the believer can see, through the lens of his

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faith, this reward that Allah mentions, eternal and everlasting, with all kinds of joy and happiness. Yet despite that you see people who have no interest in it and pay no attention to it. Do you think that this is due to a lack of interest in the hereafter and its delights, or is it the result of weak faith in Allah and lack of hope of attaining His reward? Otherwise, if a person was indeed certain about that and had deep faith in his heart, then you would find him motivated and longing for it, and he would make it his main aim and focus, and would be willing to spend a great deal in hope of reward. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Allah sees all that you do﴾, and He sees the deeds that each person does and the motivation for those deeds, and He will requite them in full.




﴿ أَيَوَدُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن تَكُونَ لَهُۥ جَنَّةٌ مِّن نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ لَهُۥ فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ ٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ وَأَصَابَهُ ٱلْكِبَرُ وَلَهُۥ ذُرِّيَّةٌ ضُعَفَآءُ فَأَصَابَهَآ إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ فَٱحْتَرَقَتْ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمُ ٱلْءَايَٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦٦﴾ ﴾

(سورة البقرة: ٢٦٦)

2:266. Does any of you wish to have a garden with date palms and vines, through which rivers flow, with all kinds of fruit, while he is stricken with old age, and his children are weak [too small to look after themselves], then it should be consumed by a fiery whirlwind? Thus Allah makes clear to you [His] revelations; that you may reflect.

This is the likeness of the one who does acts of charity and other deeds for the sake of Allah (ﷻ), then he does deeds that nullify them. His likeness is that of the owner of this garden in which there are all kinds of fruits. Date palms and grapevines are singled out for mention because of their superiority and abundant benefits, because

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they provide nourishment, staple foods and sweet fruits. In that garden there are rivers that irrigate it without the need for a great deal of effort. The owner is very happy with his garden, but then he grows old and becomes too weak to work, so he becomes more concerned about it. He has small children, none of whom are able to help him; rather they are all dependent on him, and his livelihood and theirs comes from that garden. Whilst they are like that, a storm or whirlwind in which there is fire comes to that garden and burns it up. Do not ask about what that man goes through of grief and distress; if grief could kill a person it would have killed him. This is the likeness of the one who does something for the sake of Allah; his deeds are like the seeds that are sown to get crops and fruit. He carries on like that until his efforts yield a garden of utmost splendour. The things that invalidate his deeds are like the storm in which there is fire. The individual is in the greatest need of his good deeds when he dies and is in a situation where he cannot do anything; then he finds his deeds, which he hoped would benefit him, like floating dust scattered about.

﴿...But he finds [the punishment of] Allah waiting, thus Allah will requite him in full, for Allah is swift in reckoning.﴾ *(an-Noor 24: 39)*

If a person could imagine this scenario and had the slightest understanding, he would not do that which will harm him and bring the utmost regret. But weakness of faith and reasoning, and lack of insight, bring one to this state which, if an insane person who does not understand anything were to do that which leads to the same fate, it would be a grievous matter. Hence Allah (ﷻ) instructs and encourages us to reflect, as He says: ﴿Thus Allah makes clear to you [His] revelations; that you may reflect﴾.




﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ أَنفِقُوا۟ مِن طَيِّبَٰتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّآ أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُم مِّنَ ٱلْأَرْضِ ۖ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا۟ ٱلْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُم بِـَٔاخِذِيهِ إِلَّآ أَن تُغْمِضُوا۟ فِيهِ ۚ

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وَٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَنِىٌّ حَمِيدٌ ﴿٢٦٧﴾ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ يَعِدُكُمُ ٱلْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُم بِٱلْفَحْشَآءِ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ يَعِدُكُم مَّغْفِرَةً مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلًا ۗ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٨﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٦٧-٢٦٨)

2:267. O you who believe! Give of the good things which you have earned, and of what We have produced for you from the earth, and do not select the inferior things to give away, when you yourselves would not accept them unless you were to overlook them. And know that Allah is Self-Sufficient, Owner of Praise.

2:268. The Shaytân threatens you with poverty and instructs you to be miserly, but Allah promises you His forgiveness and grace. And Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.

Here Allah (ﷻ) instructs His believing slaves to spend by giving of the good things which He has made available to them and of that which He has brought forth for them from the earth. As He has blessed you by making it easy for you to obtain these things, you should spend from them in gratitude to Allah, in fulfilment of some of the rights that your brothers have over you, and in order to purify your wealth. So you should select for that giving the good things that you like for yourselves, not that which is bad and that you do not want, and that you would only take by way of overlooking it and reluctantly.

﴿And know that Allah is Self-Sufficient, Owner of Praise﴾. He has no need of you; the benefits of your charity and good deeds come back to you. Yet He is Owner of Praise; He praises you for doing what He enjoins upon you, so you must comply with His commands, because that brings nourishment to the heart and life and joy to the soul. Beware of following your enemy the Shaytân, who instructs you to withhold your wealth and scares you with the fear of poverty and want if you do spend. But this is not sincere advice on his part, rather it is the ultimate deception.

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﴿Verily, the Shaytân is an enemy to you, so take him as an enemy. He only calls his followers so that they may become inhabitants of the raging fire.﴾ *(Fâtir 35: 6)*

Rather you should obey your Lord, Who enjoined you to spend in a way that is easy for you and does not cause you harm. Nevertheless, He ﴿promises you His forgiveness﴾ for your sins and to purify you of your faults, ﴿and grace﴾, and kindness to you in this world **and in** the hereafter, such as rapid compensation, contentment in the heart, ease in the grave, and abundant reward on the Day of Resurrection. This is not difficult for Him, because He is ﴿All-Encompassing﴾ and His grace is immense;

﴿All-Knowing﴾ – He knows what you give, great or small, secretly or openly, and He will reward you for it by His bounty, grace and kindness. So the individual should decide which of the two callers he will follow. These two verses point to a number of important matters, including the following:

- Encouragement to spend.
- Explanation of why one should spend.
- The obligation of giving zakâh on gold and silver (currency) and on all trade goods, because they are included in the words ﴿of the good things which you have earned﴾.
- The obligation of giving zakâh on what the land produces of crops, fruits and metals.
- Zakâh is due from the one who is investing in crops and fruits, not the owner of the land, because Allah says ﴿and of what We have produced for you﴾. So the one for whom it is produced is obliged to give zakâh.
- Wealth that is prepared for keeping (as opposed to selling), such as real estate, vessels and the like, is not subject to zakâh. The same applies to debts, confiscated wealth and the like, if it is not known where it is or who has it, and the owner cannot get it back. There is no zakâh on it, because Allah has

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enjoined spending from wealth that can grow, whether from the land or through trade, so that the poor may be helped from its growth. However, with regard to wealth that is not prepared for investment and is not under one's control, that is not included in this ruling.

- It is forbidden to give that which is of poor quality, and it is not acceptable as zakâh.

 

﴿يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَن يَشَاءُ ۚ وَمَن يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ۗ وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٢٦٩﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٦٩)

2:269. He grants wisdom to whomever He wills; and he to whom wisdom is granted has been given much good; but none will bear this in mind except people of understanding.

Allah (ﷻ) issued these important commands that are based on significant wisdom, but that is not attainable by all people; rather it is granted only to the one whom Allah has blessed with wisdom, which is beneficial knowledge, righteous deeds and knowledge of the reasons behind the laws. The one to whom Allah has granted wisdom has been given a great deal of good. What can be better than goodness which leads to happiness in this world and the next, and salvation from misery in both realms? In this verse we see that this blessing is only for some, namely those who are the heirs of the Prophets. Attaining a degree of perfection depends on having wisdom, because attaining such a level is only achieved by striving to attain knowledge and do righteous deeds. To attain knowledge, one must learn the truth and the aim thereof; to do righteous deeds, one must do good and refrain from evil. Thus one will be able to say and do what is right and to manage different affairs appropriately, whether it has to do with oneself or

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other people. Without that, the individual will not be able to attain that level of perfection, because Allah (ﷻ) has created His slave with the inclination to worship Him, love good and seek truth. So Allah sent the Messengers to remind them of that which is already instilled in their nature and their minds, and to explain to them that which they did not know. People may be divided into two categories: (the first of which is) those who responded to their call, and knew what would benefit them and did it, and they knew what would harm them and avoided it. These are the people of perfect understanding and sound reason. The second category is those who did not respond to their call; rather they followed that which was in accordance with their evil inclinations, and they failed to obey the Lord of humanity. These are not people of understanding. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿but none will bear this in mind except people of understanding﴾.




﴿وَمَآ أَنفَقْتُم مِّن نَّفَقَةٍ أَوْ نَذَرْتُم مِّن نَّذْرٍ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَعْلَمُهُۥ ۗ وَمَا لِلظَّٰلِمِينَ مِنْ أَنصَارٍ ﴿٢٧٠﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٧٠)

2:270. And whatever you spend in charity or whatever vows you make, then verily Allah knows it all. But for the wrongdoers there are no helpers.

This verse speaks of the reward for all types of spending, obligatory and recommended, great or small, that Allah has enjoined, as well as vows by which a person commits himself to something. Allah (ﷻ) knows them and nothing is hidden from Him; He knows the intention behind them, whether it is sincerely for His sake or not. If it is based on sincerity and seeking the pleasure of Allah, He will reward it abundantly. If a person does not spend what is enjoined upon him and does not fulfil the vows to which he committed himself, or he

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intends thereby to please people, then he is a wrongdoer who has acted inappropriately; thus he deserves a severe punishment and no one will be able to benefit him or help him. Hence Allah says: ﴿But for the wrongdoers there are no helpers﴾.




﴿إِن تُبْدُوا۟ ٱلصَّدَقَٰتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِىَ ۖ وَإِن تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا ٱلْفُقَرَآءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۚ وَيُكَفِّرُ عَنكُم مِّن سَيِّـَٔاتِكُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٧١﴾﴾

(سورة البقرة: ٢٧١)

2:271. If you disclose [acts of] charity, it is good, but if you conceal them, and give it [charity] to the poor, that is better for you, and He will expiate some of your bad deeds. And Allah is well aware of what you do.

﴿If you disclose [acts of] charity﴾ by giving them openly and publicly, if the purpose is to seek the pleasure of Allah, then ﴿it is good﴾ and it serves the intended purpose.

﴿but if you conceal them﴾ that is, do them in secret

﴿and give it [charity] to the poor, that is better for you﴾. This indicates that charity given secretly to the poor is better than charity given openly, but if charity is not being given to the poor, then the verse implies that giving secretly is not better than that which is given openly. It depends on what serves a greater purpose. If giving charity openly makes acts of worship visible and encourages others to follow suit and the like, then it is better than doing it secretly. The words ﴿and give it [charity] to the poor﴾ indicate that the giver should look for those who are in greatest need, and not give it to one who is in need, if there is someone else who is in greater need. Allah (ﷻ) tells us that charity is good for the giver, which implies that it will bring

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reward; He also says: ﴿and He will expiate some of your bad deeds﴾ which will ward off punishment.

﴿And Allah is well aware of what you do﴾ of good or evil, great or small. What is referred to here is the requital for deeds.




﴿ لَّيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَىٰهُمْ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَهْدِى مَن يَشَآءُ ۗ وَمَا تُنفِقُوا۟ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِأَنفُسِكُمْ ۚ وَمَا تُنفِقُونَ إِلَّا ٱبْتِغَآءَ وَجْهِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَمَا تُنفِقُوا۟ مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧٢﴾ لِلْفُقَرَآءِ ٱلَّذِينَ أُحْصِرُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ يَحْسَبُهُمُ ٱلْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَآءَ مِنَ ٱلتَّعَفُّفِ تَعْرِفُهُم بِسِيمَٰهُمْ لَا يَسْـَٔلُونَ ٱلنَّاسَ إِلْحَافًا ۗ وَمَا تُنفِقُوا۟ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِهِۦ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٧٣﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَٰلَهُم بِٱلَّيْلِ وَٱلنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٧٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٧٢-٢٧٤)

2:272. It is not for you [O Prophet] to guide them, but Allah guides whomever He wills. Whatever wealth you spend in charity benefits your own souls, and you do not spend except seeking the pleasure of Allah. Whatever wealth you give will be repaid to you in full, and you will not be wronged.

2:273. [Charity is] for those poor who are wholly occupied in Allah's cause and cannot move about in the land, seeking [trade or work]; the one who is unaware thinks, because of their dignity, that they are free from want. You will know them by their mark: they do not ask importunately from people. And whatever of wealth you give, then verily Allah knows it well.

2:274. Those who spend [in charity] of their wealth by night and by day, in secret and in public, will have their reward with their Lord; they will have no fear, nor will they grieve.

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Here Allah (ﷻ) says to His Prophet (ﷺ): You are not responsible for guiding people; rather all you have to do is convey the message clearly, and guidance is in the Hand of Allah (ﷻ). This indicates that just as charity may be given to a Muslim, it may also be given to a disbeliever, even if he is not guided. Hence Allah says: ﴿Whatever wealth you spend in charity﴾ that is, whether the amount is great or small, and whether it is given to a Muslim or non-Muslim,
﴿benefits your own souls﴾ that is, you are the ones who benefit from it.
﴿and you do not spend except seeking the pleasure of Allah﴾. This is a statement about charity given by the believers that is based on their faith, because it is only for the sake of Allah (ﷻ); their faith forbids them to have any bad intentions or ulterior motives, and it obliges them to be sincere.
﴿Whatever wealth you give will be repaid to you in full﴾ on the Day of Resurrection, when you will be given your reward in full
﴿and you will not be wronged﴾ that is, nothing will be detracted from your righteous deeds, not even the smallest amount, just as your bad deeds will not be increased.

Then Allah mentions the recipients of charity who are the most entitled to it, namely:

1- The poor.
2- Those who are ﴿wholly occupied in Allah's cause﴾ that is, they are completely focused on obedience to Allah, in jihad and otherwise; they are prepared for that and are kept ready for that.
3- Those who are unable to travel in order to seek provision. Allah says: ﴿and cannot move about in the land﴾ that is, they are unable to travel in order to earn a living.
4- ﴿the one who is unaware thinks, because of their dignity, that they are free from want﴾. This tells us of the sincerity of their patience and their dignified attitude.

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5- ﴿You will know them by their mark﴾ that is, as referred to in the description given of them. This does not contradict the words ﴿the one who is unaware thinks... that they are free from want﴾, because not everyone who is unaware of their condition has deep insight by means of which he may know what they are going through; as for the one who does have deep insight, he will realise as soon as he sees them and recognises their mark.

6- ﴿they do not ask importunately from people﴾ that is, they do not ask persistently; rather if they do ask, in the case of necessity, they do not persist in asking.

These are the ones who are most deserving of charity, because Allah described them in the best terms. As for spending in charity on anyone, it is good and kind, and the one who does that will be rewarded. Hence Allah says: ﴿And whatever of wealth you give, then verily Allah knows it well﴾.

Then Allah tells us of the status of those who give charity at all times and in all circumstances:

﴿Those who spend [in charity] of their wealth﴾ for the sake of Allah, in obedience to Him and seeking His pleasure, and they do not spend it on things that are forbidden or disliked, or to fulfil their own whims and desires

﴿by night and by day, in secret and in public, will have their reward with their Lord﴾ that is, a great reward with the Most Merciful Lord.

﴿they will have no fear﴾ when those who fell short will be afraid

﴿nor will they grieve﴾ when those who were heedless grieve. They will attain their goal and be saved from what they fear.

As Allah referred to the status of those who are kind to His slaves by spending on them in different ways, He also refers to the wrongdoers who mistreat His slaves in the worst manner:

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﴿ٱلَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ ٱلرِّبَوٰا۟ لَا يَقُومُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ ٱلَّذِى يَتَخَبَّطُهُ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ مِنَ ٱلْمَسِّ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوٓا۟ إِنَّمَا ٱلْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ ٱلرِّبَوٰا۟ ۗ وَأَحَلَّ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ ٱلرِّبَوٰا۟ ۚ فَمَن جَآءَهُۥ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِۦ فَٱنتَهَىٰ فَلَهُۥ مَا سَلَفَ وَأَمْرُهُۥٓ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلنَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿٢٧٥﴾ يَمْحَقُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلرِّبَوٰا۟ وَيُرْبِى ٱلصَّدَقَٰتِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿٢٧٦﴾ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ وَأَقَامُوا۟ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتَوُا۟ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٧٧﴾ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَذَرُوا۟ مَا بَقِىَ مِنَ ٱلرِّبَوٰٓا۟ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٧٨﴾ فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا۟ فَأْذَنُوا۟ بِحَرْبٍ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ ۖ وَإِن تُبْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ رُءُوسُ أَمْوَٰلِكُمْ لَا تَظْلِمُونَ وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧٩﴾ وَإِن كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ مَيْسَرَةٍ ۚ وَأَن تَصَدَّقُوا۟ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨٠﴾ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨١﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٧٥-٢٨١)

2:275. Those who consume usury will not stand [on the Day of Resurrection] except like a madman who is being beaten by the Shaytân. That is because they say: Trade is like usury; but Allah has permitted trade and forbidden usury. Therefore, he who desists because of the admonition that has come to him from his Lord may keep his past gains; his case is for Allah [to judge]; but those who return to it will be inhabitants of the fire; they will abide therein forever.

2:276. Allah destroys usury, but will give increase for deeds of charity. Allah does not love any ungrateful sinner.

2:277. Those who believe, and do righteous deeds, and establish prayer and give zakâh, will have their reward with their Lord; they will have no fear nor will they grieve.

2:278. O you who believe! Fear Allah, and give up what is still due to you of usury, if you are indeed believers.

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2:279. If you do not do it, then be warned of a declaration of war from Allah and His Messenger: But if you repent, you may retain your capital, neither wronging, nor being wronged.

2:280. If the debtor is in difficulty, give him time until it is easy for him to repay. But if you remit it by way of charity, that is best for you, if only you knew.

2:281. And fear the day when you will be brought back to Allah. Then every soul will be paid in full for what it earned, and none will be wronged.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the bad end and hardship that those who consume usury will face: they will not rise from their graves on the Day of Resurrection to stand ﴿except like a madman who is being beaten by the Shaytân﴾. So they will rise from their graves confused and shaky, as if they are drunk, expecting a severe punishment. That is because they thought and said: ﴿Trade is like usury﴾. Such a statement would only come from one who is very ignorant or one who ignores what he knows out of stubbornness. So Allah will requite them in an appropriate manner, and they will become like insane people. It may be understood from the words ﴿[they] will not stand [on the Day of Resurrection] except like a madman who is being beaten by the Shaytân﴾ that when they lost their minds in seeking to earn through usury, they became very foolish and unable to think properly. Their appearance and movements will be like those of insane people, with a complete lack of coordination and loss of rational thinking.

Allah (ﷻ) says, responding to them and explaining His great wisdom: ﴿but Allah has permitted trade﴾ because it serves the public interest and there is a great need for it, and because prohibiting it would cause great harm. This is the basis for the permissibility of all ways of earning money, unless there is a text to indicate that something is not permitted.

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﴿and forbidden usury﴾ because of what it entails of wrongdoing and evil consequences. Usury (ribâ) is of two types: ribâ *nasee'ah* (pay now, or pay an increased amount later); and ribâ *faḍl*, which involves trading two things of the same type, where one is greater in quantity than the other. Both are haram, according to the Qur'an and Sunnah, and according to the consensus of the scholars in the case of ribâ nasee'ah; those who permitted ribâ faḍl held an odd view that is contrary to the abundant texts. Rather usury is one of the major sins that may doom a person to hell.

﴿Therefore, he who desists﴾ that is, gives up what he is doing and is deterred from it

﴿because of the admonition that has come to him from his Lord﴾ that is, the admonition, reminder and warning against dealing in usury. This admonition is a mercy from Allah towards those to whom it is addressed, and serves to establish proof against them.

﴿may keep his past gains﴾ that resulted from previous transactions in which he engaged before this admonition reached him; he may keep them as a reward for accepting the advice. This verse indicates that the one who does not desist will be punished for both his earlier and later actions.

﴿his case is for Allah [to judge]﴾ as to whether to requite him

﴿but those who return to it﴾ that is, to dealing in usury, and who do not benefit from the admonition; rather they persist in it

﴿will be inhabitants of the fire; they will abide therein forever﴾. The scholars (may Allah have mercy on them) differed concerning the texts that speak of punishment where the apparent meaning suggests that those who commit major sins that are less serious than associating others with Allah (shirk) will abide in hell forever. The best view is that which says that in these cases where Allah states that certain sins will doom a person to eternity in hell are applicable provided there is no impediment (that is, tawḥeed or belief in the oneness of Allah). It is known from the Qur'an and Sunnah, and from the consensus of

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the early generations of the Ummah, that the one who believes in the oneness of Allah (tawheed) and has faith cannot abide in hell forever. However, if a person does not believe in tawheed, then the sin or usury, let alone his disbelief, would qualify him to abide in hell forever.

﴿Allah destroys usury﴾ that is, He takes it away and takes away its blessing, so that it becomes a source of problems and trouble and takes away blessing from the individual's life. If he spends from it, he will not be rewarded; rather it will bring him closer to hell.
﴿but will give increase for deeds of charity﴾ that is, He will cause it to grow and will send down blessings upon the wealth from which the charity is given, and He will reward the giver. That is because the requital befits the action. The one who deals in usury wrongs people and takes their wealth in an unlawful manner, so he is punished with loss of his wealth. The one who is good to people shows kindness to them in different ways, and his Lord is kinder than he is, so He treats him kindly, as He is kind to His slaves.
﴿Allah does not love any ungrateful sinner﴾ that is, one who is ungrateful for the blessings of Allah and does not do what is enjoined upon him of giving charity, and people are not safe from him or his evil.
﴿sinner﴾ that is, one who does actions that incur a burden of sin and punishment.

After mentioning those who consume usury, and noting that if they had been believers who truly benefited from their faith, they would not have done what they did, Allah then mentions the condition and reward of the believers. He addresses them as believers and forbids them to consume usury, if they are indeed believers. They are the ones who accept the admonition of their Lord and obey His command. He instructs them to fear Him, and part of that fear of Him is that they should give up what remains of usury, that is, any current existing transactions. As for that which is past, whoever heeds the admonition, Allah will pardon him for what is in the past, but whoever does

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not heed the admonition of Allah and does not accept His advice is opposing his Lord and is effectively in a state of war against Him, at the time when he is helpless and weak, and has no power to wage war against the Almighty, the Most Wise, Who gives respite to the evildoer but does not forget about him, and will eventually punish him severely.

﴿But if you repent﴾ from dealing in usury
﴿you may retain your capital﴾, and that is all you are entitled to
﴿neither wronging﴾ those with whom you do business, by taking anything extra, which is usury
﴿nor being wronged﴾ by the loss of your capital.

﴿If the debtor is in difficulty﴾ and cannot pay off what he owes ﴿give him time until it is easy for him to repay﴾. It is obligatory to give him more time, until he can afford it.
﴿But if you remit it by way of charity, that is best for you, if only you knew﴾. This refers to waiving the debt, completely or partially.

﴿And fear the day when you will be brought back to Allah. Then every soul will be paid in full for what it earned, and none will be wronged﴾. This verse was one of the last verses of the Qur'an to be revealed, and it was placed at the end of these rulings, commands and prohibitions, because it contains a promise (of reward) for doing good and a warning against doing evil. If a person knows that he will return to Allah, and that He will requite him for all his deeds, great and small, public and private, and that Allah will not wrong him in the slightest, he will inevitably develop hope of reward and fear of punishment. Without having this knowledge in his heart, there is no way he could develop that hope and fear.




﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ إِذَا تَدَايَنتُم بِدَيۡنٍ إِلَىٰٓ أَجَلٖ مُّسَمّٗى فَٱكۡتُبُوهُۚ وَلۡيَكۡتُب
بَّيۡنَكُمۡ كَاتِبُۢ بِٱلۡعَدۡلِۚ وَلَا يَأۡبَ كَاتِبٌ أَن يَكۡتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ ٱللَّهُۚ فَلۡيَكۡتُبۡ

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وَلْيُمْلِلِ ٱلَّذِى عَلَيْهِ ٱلْحَقُّ وَلْيَتَّقِ ٱللَّهَ رَبَّهُۥ وَلَا يَبْخَسْ مِنْهُ شَيْـًٔا ۚ فَإِن كَانَ ٱلَّذِى عَلَيْهِ ٱلْحَقُّ سَفِيهًا أَوْ ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَن يُمِلَّ هُوَ فَلْيُمْلِلْ وَلِيُّهُۥ بِٱلْعَدْلِ ۚ وَٱسْتَشْهِدُوا۟ شَهِيدَيْنِ مِن رِّجَالِكُمْ ۖ فَإِن لَّمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَٱمْرَأَتَانِ مِمَّن تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ ٱلشُّهَدَآءِ أَن تَضِلَّ إِحْدَىٰهُمَا فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحْدَىٰهُمَا ٱلْأُخْرَىٰ ۚ وَلَا يَأْبَ ٱلشُّهَدَآءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا۟ ۚ وَلَا تَسْـَٔمُوٓا۟ أَن تَكْتُبُوهُ صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَبِيرًا إِلَىٰٓ أَجَلِهِۦ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَـٰدَةِ وَأَدْنَىٰٓ أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوٓا۟ ۖ إِلَّآ أَن تَكُونَ تِجَـٰرَةً حَاضِرَةً تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا ۗ وَأَشْهِدُوٓا۟ إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ ۚ وَلَا يُضَآرَّ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ ۚ وَإِن تَفْعَلُوا۟ فَإِنَّهُۥ فُسُوقٌۢ بِكُمْ ۗ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ ۖ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ ٱللَّهُ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨٢﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٨٢)

2:282. O you who believe! When you contract debts among yourselves for a stated period of time, write it down. Let a scribe write it down faithfully between you. No scribe should refuse to write, as Allah has taught him, so let him write, and let the one incurring the debt dictate, and let him fear Allah his Lord, and not diminish [the debt] at all. If the debtor is feeble-minded or incapacitated, or unable himself to dictate, then let his guardian dictate faithfully, and call to witness two men from among you; if two men are not available, then a man and two women, such as you choose, to act as witnesses, so that if one of them forgets, the other can remind her. The witnesses should not refuse when they are summoned. Do not be reluctant to write down your debts, whether small or large, together with the time of repayment; that is more equitable in the sight of Allah, more reliable as evidence, and more likely to prevent doubts among yourselves. But if it is a transaction which you carry out on the spot among yourselves, there is no blame on you if you do not write it down. Have witnesses present whenever you trade with one another, and let neither scribe nor witness suffer harm, for if you did cause them harm, it would be wickedness on your

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part. So fear Allah, for it is Allah Who teaches you. And Allah has full knowledge of all things.

This is the verse of debt, which is the longest verse in the Qur'an. It contains important rulings which are of great benefit and value. These rulings are as follows:

1- All types of dealings that are based on credit or otherwise are permissible, because Allah tells us about dealings based on credit that the believers engaged in, in a manner that is indicative of approval and lays out guidelines concerning them. This indicates that they are permissible.
2- In the case of credit, there must be a deadline for delivery.
3- It is essential that the deadline be specified and known; it cannot be specified that delivery will be immediate or that the deal is open-ended.
4- It is enjoined to put in writing all types of dealings that are based on credit. Doing so is either obligatory or recommended, and writing it down is essential because without putting it in writing, there is a great risk of problems such as mistakes, forgetting, disputes and quarrels.
5- The scribe should be instructed to write.
6- He should be a person of good character for his writing to be reliable, because what is said or written by an evildoer is not reliable.
7- He should write it down faithfully between them, and not be biased in favour of one of them because of ties of kinship or friendship and the like.
8- The scribe should know how to write documents and all that is required of each party in a particular case. He should also know how to make the document binding, because there is no other way to be fair and just. This is understood from the words: ﴿Let a scribe write it down faithfully between you﴾.

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9- If there is a document (of debt) in the handwriting of one who is known to be faithful or fair, as mentioned, it should be relied upon, even if he and the witnesses have died.

10- The words ﴿No scribe should refuse to write﴾ mean: no one whom Allah has blessed by enabling him to learn how to write should refuse to write down (a contract) between a debtor and creditor. Just as Allah has shown kindness to him by causing him to learn, he should treat kindly the slaves of Allah who need his writing, and he should not refuse to write for them.

11- The scribe should be instructed not to write anything but what the one who owes the debt dictates to him.

12- The one who dictates to the scribe should be the one who owes the debt.

13- He should be instructed to disclose everything that he owes, and not diminish (the debt) at all.

14- If someone admits that he owes something to someone else, it is to be accepted, because Allah instructed the one who owes the debt to dictate to the scribe. When the admission of debt is put in writing, what he has admitted of debt becomes binding, even if he claims after that that he made a mistake or forgot.

15- If there is any person who owes debts to others and there is proof of the amount and how great or small it is, and whether payment is due now or later, his statement is to be accepted and not the statement of the one to whom it is owed, because Allah (ﷻ) told him not to diminish (the debt), yet his statement concerning the amount owed and the terms of repayment is to be accepted.

16- It is forbidden for the one who owes the debt to diminish it or reduce it in terms of its quantity and quality, or the timescale of repayment, and other factors.

17- The one who is unable to dictate the debt because he is too young, feebleminded, unable to speak and so on, can appoint his guardian to dictate on his behalf and admit the debt.

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18- The guardian is obliged to be faithful and fair just as the debtor himself is enjoined to be, and he should not diminish the debt, because Allah says ﴿faithfully﴾.

19- Good character on the part of the guardian is essential, because dictating faithfully as mentioned cannot be done by an evildoer.

20- Guardianship in financial matters (that is, doing business on behalf of another) is valid.

21- The debt is owed by the minor or by the one who is feebleminded, insane or incapacitated; it is not owed by the guardian.

22- Acknowledgement of the debt by the minor or the person who is feebleminded, insane, mentally challenged and so on, and their transactions, are not valid, because Allah has given their guardian the authority to dictate, and He did not give them any authority therein, out of compassion and mercy towards them, lest their wealth be lost.

23- The guardian's handling of the wealth of the people mentioned is valid.

24- This verse shows that it is prescribed for a person to learn everything that each party to a transaction needs to know in order to document it and preserve his rights, because the aim here is to document the transaction, provide proof and guarantee equity. That which is essential in order to achieve what is prescribed is also prescribed.

25- Acquiring literacy is prescribed; in fact it is a communal obligation, because Allah has enjoined the writing down of debts and other matters, which cannot be achieved except by learning.

26- It is enjoined to have contracts witnessed. This is recommended, because the aim behind it is to protect people's rights, which serves their interests. If the one who is carrying out the transaction is acting on behalf of another, such as the guardian of an orphan or the caretaker of an endowment (*waqf*) and other

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cases in which recording transactions is essential, then having it witnessed becomes obligatory.

27- The minimum number of witnesses in financial transactions and so on is two men or a man and two women. The Sunnah indicates that one witness, accompanied by the oath of the claimant, is also sufficient.

28- The testimony of boys is not acceptable, because the verse specifically mentions men.

29- The testimony of women on their own concerning financial transactions and the like is not to be accepted, because Allah did not accept women's testimony unless it is accompanied by that of a man.

30- The testimony of an adult male slave is acceptable just like the testimony of a free man, because of the general meaning of the words ﴿and call to witness two men from among you﴾, and an adult slave is one of our men.

31- The testimony of the disbelievers, whether they are male or female, is not acceptable, because they are not of us and because testimony should be based on good character, and they are not of good character.

32- This verse indicates that men are superior to women, and that the testimony of one man is equal to that of two women, because men have good memories and women do not.

33- If someone forgets his testimony, then remembers it later on, his testimony is still to be accepted, because Allah says: ﴿the other can remind her﴾.

34- From the meaning of this verse it may be understood that if a witness is afraid of forgetting his testimony with regard to the dues of others, then he must write it down, because that which is essential to fulfilment of an obligatory duty is also obligatory.

35- If a witness is summoned and has no excuse, it is not permissible for him to refuse, because Allah says: ﴿The witnesses should not refuse when they are summoned﴾.

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36- If a person's testimony will not be acceptable, then it is not obligatory for him to respond if he is summoned, because there is no benefit in his doing so, and he is not counted as a witness.

37- It is not allowed to be reluctant or find it too burdensome to write down debts every time, whether they are great or small, and to write down the time of payment, and all the other conditions and restrictions in the contract.

38- This verse highlights the wisdom behind the prescription to write down contracts and have them witnessed, which is that it ﴿is more equitable in the sight of Allah, more reliable as evidence, and more likely to prevent doubts among yourselves﴾. It guarantees fairness and justice, on which the well-being of people and the country is based. Testimony accompanied by written documentation is more proper and better, and further removed from doubt, suspicion, disputes and quarrels.

39- From this it may be understood that if a person is uncertain about his testimony, he has no right to give it; rather he must be certain of his testimony.

40- The words ﴿But if it is a transaction which you carry out on the spot among yourselves, there is no blame on you if you do not write it down﴾ indicate that there is a concession allowing people not to write it down if it is a transaction on the spot in which there is a hand to hand exchange, because there is no great need to write it down.

41- Although there is a concession allowing people not to write down transactions conducted on the spot, it is still prescribed to call witnesses, because Allah says: ﴿Have witnesses present whenever you trade with one another﴾.

42- It is prohibited to harm the scribe by calling him at a time when he is busy and it is difficult for him to attend.

43- It is also prohibited to harm witnesses by calling them to witness or give testimony when they are ill or busy and it is too difficult

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for them to attend, and so on. This is based on the words ﴿and let neither scribe nor witness suffer harm﴾. However, this phrase may also be understood as meaning "and let neither scribe nor witness cause harm" to the one to whom the debt is owed, by refusing or demanding too high a fee, and so on.

44- The above may mean that the scribe should not cause any harm (to the lender).

45- It may also mean that the witness should not cause any such harm either.

46- Doing these forbidden actions is a characteristic of wickedness, because Allah says: ﴿for if you did cause them harm, it would be wickedness on your part﴾.

47- Attributes such as wickedness, faith, hypocrisy, enmity, faithfulness and so on may be partial characteristics (that is, not an individual's main characteristic). Thus a person may have some element of wickedness and the like, and he may also have some element of belief or disbelief, because Allah says: ﴿it would be wickedness on your part﴾ and He did not say, "you would be wicked."

48- The witness should be of good character, because Allah says: ﴿such as you choose, to act as witnesses﴾.

49- The definition of good character is to be based on what people regard as good character in every place and time. Whoever is regarded by people as being of good character is to be accepted as a witness.

50- Based on this, the testimony of one whose character is not known should not be accepted until he is proven to be of good character.

These rulings are what may be derived from this verse according to the best of my limited knowledge. Allah has further wisdom and subtle reasons, understanding of which He grants to whomever He will.

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﴿ ۞ وَإِن كُنتُمْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِبًا فَرِهَٰنٌ مَّقْبُوضَةٌ ۖ فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا فَلْيُؤَدِّ الَّذِي اؤْتُمِنَ أَمَانَتَهُ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ ۗ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ ۚ وَمَن يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ آثِمٌ قَلْبُهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨٣﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٨٣)

2:283. If you are on a journey, and cannot find a scribe, then something should be handed over as collateral. But if you trust one another [and there is no need for collateral], let the one who is trusted fulfil his trust, and let him fear Allah his Lord. Do not conceal testimony, for whoever conceals it has a sinful heart. And Allah is well aware of all that you do.

That is, if you are travelling ﴿and cannot find a scribe﴾ to write down the deal between you and document it ﴿then something should be handed over as collateral﴾ that is, the lender should take possession of it, to keep it as security until he is repaid. This indicates that collateral that is not handed over does not serve as security. It also indicates that if the one who gives collateral and the one who receives it differ concerning the amount for which the collateral is given, the lender is the one whose word is to be accepted, the reason being that Allah has ordained collateral instead of writing down in order to secure the loan for the lender. If the word of the one who is keeping the collateral was not acceptable with regard to the amount for which it was left with him, then it would not serve the purpose. As the aim of collateral is to secure loans, it is acceptable when travelling and when not travelling. Allah only mentioned travelling here because it is more likely to be needed in that situation when there is no scribe available. All of this applies in the case of a lender who wants to have some security regarding his loan. But if the lender trusts the borrower and wants to deal with him without collateral, then the one who owes

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him must pay back in full, and should not transgress against him or diminish the value of what he owes him.

﴿and let him fear Allah his Lord﴾ in paying back what he owes and showing kindness to the one who trusted him.

﴿Do not conceal testimony﴾ because rights that cannot be proved otherwise are based on it, so concealing it is a grave sin, because it is failing to do his duty of stating the facts, and it results in the lender losing what is due to him. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿for whoever conceals it has a sinful heart. And Allah is well aware of all that you do﴾. This verse includes these rulings through which Allah has guided His slaves, which are based on great wisdom and serve great purposes. This indicates that if people followed Allah's guidance in these rulings, their affairs, both worldly and spiritual, would be in the best shape, because these rulings lead to justice and that which is in the Muslims' best interests; rights would be protected, quarrels and conflicts would be prevented, and peaceful relations between people would be guaranteed. To Allah be praise such as befits His majesty and might; we cannot praise Him enough.




﴿لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَإِن تُبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبْكُم بِهِ اللَّهُ ۖ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٨٤﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٨٤)

2:284. To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth. Whether you disclose what is in your minds or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it. He forgives whomever He will, and punishes whomever He will, for Allah has power over all things.

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Here Allah tells us that to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth; He created every one, He granted them provision and He guides them to that which is in their best interests, both worldly and spiritual. So they are His possessions and slaves; they possess no power to cause harm or bring benefit to themselves and they possess no power with regard to death, life or resurrection. He is their Lord and sovereign Who controls their affairs on the basis of His wisdom, justice and kindness. He has ordained commands and prohibitions for them and will bring them to account for all that they conceal or disclose.

﴿He forgives whomever He will﴾ namely the one who takes the measures that lead to forgiveness. And He punishes whomever He will for his sins, the one who did not go through anything that could lead to expiation.[21]

﴿for Allah has power over all things﴾ and nothing is beyond Him; rather all people are subject to His control, His will, His decree and His requital.

﴿ءَامَنَ ٱلرَّسُولُ بِمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِن رَّبِّهِۦ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۚ كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ وَكُتُبِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّن رُّسُلِهِۦ ۚ وَقَالُوا۟ سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ۖ غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ ٱلْمَصِيرُ ﴿٢٨٥﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٨٥)

2:285. The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the believers. Each [of them] believes in Allah, His angels, His Books, and His Messengers. We make no distinction between one and another of His Messengers. And they say: We hear, and we obey. Grant us Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the return [of all].

[21] Sins may be expiated by different means, such as hardship, sickness, loss of loved ones, and so on.

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Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about the faith, submission and obedience of the Messenger (ﷺ) and the believers who were with him, and their asking Him for forgiveness. He tells us that they believe in Allah, His angels, His Books and His Messengers. This implies belief in everything that Allah has told us about Himself or that His Messengers have told us about Him, namely the attributes of His perfection and majesty, in brief and in detail, as well as the declaration that He is above being likened to His creation and is above any denial of His attributes and above all shortcomings. It also implies belief in the angels who are referred to in the texts in general terms and in detail, as well as belief in all the Messengers and Books. That in turn implies belief in everything that the Messengers have told us and everything contained in the Books of stories, commands and prohibitions. They (the believers) do not differentiate between any of His Messengers; rather they believe in all of them because they are all intermediaries between Allah and His slaves, so disbelief in one of them is disbelief in all of them, and is in fact disbelief in Allah.

﴿And they say: We hear﴾ what You have enjoined upon us and what You have forbidden to us

﴿and we obey﴾ You in that, and we are not of those who say: We hear and disobey.

Because people will inevitably fall short with regard to the rights of Allah and thus are in need of His forgiveness all the time, they say: ﴿Grant us Your forgiveness﴾ that is, we ask You for forgiveness for what we have done of shortcomings and sins, and to erase our faults ﴿and to You is the return [of all]﴾ that is, all creatures will return to You and You will requite them for what they have done of good or evil.

 

﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ ٱللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۚ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا ٱكْتَسَبَتْ ۗ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَآ إِن نَّسِينَآ أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا ۚ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَآ إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُۥ عَلَى

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ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِنَا ۚ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِۦ ۖ وَٱعْفُ عَنَّا وَٱغْفِرْ لَنَا وَٱرْحَمْنَآ ۚ أَنتَ مَوْلَىٰنَا فَٱنصُرْنَا عَلَى ٱلْقَوْمِ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٢٨٦﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٨٦)

2:286. Allah does not place on any soul a burden greater than it can bear. For it is what it has earned, and against it is what it has committed. Our Lord, do not hold us accountable if we forget or fall into error. Our Lord, do not lay on us a burden like that which You laid on those who came before us. Our Lord, do not lay on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Pardon us, forgive us and have mercy on us; You are our Protector, so help us against the disbelieving people.

When Allah revealed the words ﴿Whether you disclose what is in your minds or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it﴾ *(2: 284)*, the Muslims were distressed by it because they thought that they would be called to account for whatever entered their minds of persistent or passing thoughts. So in this verse, Allah told them that He does not place on any soul a burden greater than it can bear; in other words, (whatever burden He places upon an individual) is within his capability and He does not overburden him or make things too difficult for him. Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿...He... has not imposed any hardship on you in religion...﴾ *(al-Hajj 22: 78)*

In principle, the commands and prohibitions are not too difficult for people to adhere to; rather they are nourishment for the soul, a remedy for the body and protection from harm. Allah (ﷻ) enjoined these things for His slaves out of mercy and kindness, yet despite that, if something is too hard to adhere to for some reason, He grants concessions to make it easier, by waiving it either completely or partially, as in the case of the concessions made for those who are sick or travelling, and so on.

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Then Allah (ﷻ) tells us that each soul will be rewarded for what it did of good, and whatever it did of evil will be counted against it; no soul will carry the burden of another and no one's reward will be given to someone else. The word which is translated here as ﴿earned﴾ (*kasaba*) flows more easily on the tongue, which indicates that doing good is easier and takes less effort, and as soon as a person forms the intention to do good, the reward begins. On the other hand, the word translated here as ﴿committed﴾ (*aktasaba*) is more difficult to say, which indicates that doing evil is not recorded against an individual unless he actually makes the effort to do it.

As Allah has told us about the faith of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the believers who were with him, and that each person will be requited for his actions, and that man will inevitably fall short, make mistakes and forget, He then tells us that He does not place on us any burden greater than what we can bear. He also tells us of the supplication of the believers to that effect. The Prophet (ﷺ) told us that Allah said: "I have done that," in response to this supplication.

﴿Our Lord, do not hold us accountable if we forget or fall into error﴾. The difference between the two is that forgetting occurs when one becomes absent-minded about what he is instructed to do, so he fails to do it because he forgot it. Error occurs when a person aims to do something that is permissible, then the result of his action is not permissible. Allah has pardoned this Ummah for whatever they fall into of these two things, out of mercy and kindness towards them.

Based on that, if a person prays wearing a stolen or unclean garment, or he forgot about some impurity that was on his body, or he talks during the prayer because he forgot, or if he does something that breaks the fast because he forgot, or he does one of the actions that are forbidden when in iḥrâm but does not involve killing an animal (this refers to hunting, which is forbidden when in iḥrâm and for which a compensatory sacrifice must be offered), because he forgot, he is forgiven for that. By the same token, the one who swore an oath not

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to do something is not regarded as having broken his oath if he does the thing he swore not to do because he forgot. Similarly, if a person kills someone accidentally or destroys property accidentally, there is no sin on him; rather he is liable and must offer some compensation because of the results of his action, not because of his sin. Similarly, if a person forgets to mention the name of Allah at times when he should mention His name, it does not matter.

﴿Our Lord, do not lay on us a burden﴾ that is, difficult responsibilities ﴿like that which You laid on those who came before us﴾. And Allah (ﷻ) answered this supplication, as He granted concessions to this Ummah in matters pertaining to purification and different acts of worship, which He made easier in a way that he did not do for other nations.

﴿Our Lord, do not lay on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear﴾. Allah has answered this supplication also; to Him be praise. ﴿Pardon us, forgive us and have mercy on us﴾. Pardon and forgiveness are acts by means of which one may ward off evil and harm; mercy is that by virtue of which one attains well-being in all one's affairs. ﴿You are our Protector﴾ that is, You are our Lord, Sovereign and God, Whose protection and care for us have never faltered since You created us and formed us. Your blessing is constantly bestowed upon us at every moment of our lives. Moreover, You have bestowed upon us a great blessing and marvellous gift, namely the blessing of Islam to which all other blessings are secondary. So we ask You, O our Lord and Sovereign, to complete Your blessing by helping us against the disbelieving people who have disbelieved in You and Your Messenger (ﷺ), opposed the followers of Your religion and disobeyed You. Help us against them with proof and evidence, and on the battlefield, by causing us to prevail in the land and causing their defeat; bless us with faith and righteous deeds that lead to victory. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

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This is the end of the commentary on Soorat al-Baqarah.

All praise and thanks are for Allah, and may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his family, and his Companions abundantly until the Day of Judgement.



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03.
Soorat Âl 'Imrân

(Madani)

The first eighty-odd verses of this soorah have to do with debating with the Christians, highlighting the flaws in their arguments and calling them to enter the true religion, which is Islam, as the first part of Soorat al-Baqarah spoke of debating with the Jews, as discussed previously.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah,
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

﴿الٓمٓ ﴿١﴾ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ ﴿٢﴾ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنزَلَ التَّوْرَاةَ وَالْإِنجِيلَ ﴿٣﴾ مِن قَبْلُ هُدًى لِلنَّاسِ وَأَنزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انتِقَامٍ ﴿٤﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿٥﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ ۚ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٦﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١-٦)

3:1. Alif. Lâm. Meem.[22]

[22] Groups of letters (*al-ḥuroof al-muqaṭṭa'ah*) appear at the beginning of several soorahs. The most correct scholarly view states that we are required to believe in them as they appear to be, without delving into their meaning, knowledge of which we should leave to Allah. We believe that =

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3:2. Allah: there is no god but He, the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining and All-Sustaining.

3:3. He has sent down to you the Book in truth, confirming what came before it; and He sent down the Torah and the Gospel

3:4. before this, as a guide to humankind, and He sent down the criterion [between right and wrong]. Then those who disbelieve in the revelations of Allah will suffer a severe punishment, and Allah is Almighty, an Avenger.

3:5. From Allah, verily nothing is hidden on earth or in the heavens.

3:6. He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He wills. There is no god but He, the Almighty, the Most Wise.

Allah (ﷻ) begins this soorah by telling us of His divinity and that He is God and there is no god but He; no devotion or worship should be directed to anyone but Him. Everything other than Him that is worshipped is false; Allah is the true God Who has the divine attributes that are inherently implied in these two names. The Ever-Living is the One Who has life in the most perfect sense, which implies all attributes without which life cannot be complete or perfect, such as hearing, seeing, power, strength, greatness, eternal life, and unsurpassable might. The Self-Sustaining and All-Sustaining is the One Who sustains Himself and has no need of any of His creation, and the One Who sustains all others. All created beings need Him to be brought into existence, to be formed and shaped, and to be sustained. He is the One Who controls the affairs of all creatures, body, mind and soul. One aspect of His sustaining and caring for His slaves and showing mercy towards them is that He sent down to His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) the Book, which is the greatest and holiest of the Books, containing truth in its stories, commands and prohibitions. What He says is truth and what He ordains is justice. He sent it down in truth so that people would worship their Lord and learn His Book.

= they were not revealed in vain, and that there is wisdom behind them of which we are not aware.

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﴿confirming what came before it﴾ of the previous books. So it is a judge over them; what it confirms is to be accepted and what it refutes is to be rejected. What you find in the Qur'an of rulings that all previous Messengers agreed upon you will find in other books too, and these (previous books) testify that the Qur'an is truly from Allah. But the People of the Book cannot truly believe in their books if they do not believe in the Qur'an; their disbelief in it undermines their belief in their own books.

Then Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿and He sent down the Torah﴾ to Moosâ ﴿and the Gospel﴾ to 'Eesâ

﴿before this﴾ that is, before the sending down of the Qur'an ﴿as a guide to humankind﴾. The apparent meaning of this phrase is that it refers to everything mentioned previously, that is, Allah sent down the Qur'an, the Torah and the Gospel as a guide to humankind to steer them away from misguidance, so whoever accepts the guidance of Allah is guided, and whoever does not accept it will remain misguided. ﴿and He sent down the criterion [between right and wrong]﴾ that is, definitive arguments, proof and evidence that point to the right path. Thus Allah explains what people need to know, so that the rulings will remain clear and no one will have any excuse or argument for not believing in Allah and His revelations. Hence He says: ﴿Then those who disbelieve in the revelations of Allah﴾ that is, after He has explained them, and made them clear and removed any ambiguity ﴿will suffer a severe punishment﴾ that no one can imagine how severe it is or comprehend its nature.
﴿and Allah is Almighty﴾ that is, powerful, and nothing is beyond Him ﴿an Avenger﴾ against those who disobey Him.

﴿From Allah, verily nothing is hidden on earth or in the heavens﴾. This is an affirmation that His knowledge encompasses all things, manifest and hidden, visible and invisible, including the foetus in the womb that cannot be seen by other created beings, and of which they have no knowledge at the time when He is caring for it in the

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best manner and it is developing according to His decree. Hence He says: ﴿He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He wills﴾, complete or incomplete, beautiful or ugly, male or female.
﴿the Almighty, the Most Wise﴾.

These verses affirm the divinity of Allah and that it is His alone, and they declare false the divinity of anything other than Him. This is a refutation of the Christians who claimed that 'Eesâ ibn Maryam (ﷺ) was divine. The verses also affirm the perfect life of Allah, Who is self-sustaining and sustains others completely. These two attributes (divinity and perfect life) imply all the other divine attributes, as discussed above. These verses also affirm the great scriptures and tell us that they were a mercy and guidance for people; hence people are divided into those who are guided and those who are not, and those who do not follow the guidance (of these scriptures) will be punished. There is also affirmation of the vastness of Allah's knowledge, and that His will and wisdom always come to pass.

﴿ هُوَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَنزَلَ عَلَيْكَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ مِنْهُ ءَايَٰتٌ مُّحْكَمَٰتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَٰبِهَٰتٌ ۖ فَأَمَّا ٱلَّذِينَ فِى قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَٰبَهَ مِنْهُ ٱبْتِغَآءَ ٱلْفِتْنَةِ وَٱبْتِغَآءَ تَأْوِيلِهِۦ ۗ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُۥٓ إِلَّا ٱللَّهُ ۘ وَٱلرَّٰسِخُونَ فِى ٱلْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ ءَامَنَّا بِهِۦ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِندِ رَبِّنَا ۗ وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّآ أُو۟لُوا۟ ٱلْأَلْبَٰبِ ﴿٧﴾ رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلْوَهَّابُ ﴿٨﴾ رَبَّنَآ إِنَّكَ جَامِعُ ٱلنَّاسِ لِيَوْمٍ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيهِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ ٱلْمِيعَادَ ﴿٩﴾ ﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ٧-٩)

3:7. It is He Who has sent down to you the Book. In it are definitive verses, which are the foundation of the Book; others are ambiguous, but those in whose hearts is deviation follow the part thereof that is ambiguous, seeking [to cause] confusion,

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and seeking an interpretation [that suits them]. But no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allah. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: We believe in [the Book]; all of it is from our Lord. None will pay heed except people of understanding.

3:8. Our Lord, do not let our hearts deviate now after You have guided us, and bestow upon us mercy from Yourself; for You are the Bestower.

3:9. Our Lord, You will gather all people on the day of which there is no doubt; for Allah does not break His promise.

The entire Qur'an is definitive, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...This is a Book, the verses of which are perfected, then explained in detail, from One Who is Most Wise, All-Aware.﴾ *(Hood 11: 1)*

It is precise, based on clarity, justice and perfection.

﴿...But who could be better in judgement than Allah, for a people who are certain in faith?﴾ *(al-Mâ'idah 5: 50)*

All of it is similar in beauty and eloquence, with some parts confirming others and with similarities in terms of wording and meaning. With regard to the definitive clarity and ambiguity mentioned in this verse, Allah says, in reference to the Qur'an: ﴿In it are definitive verses﴾ that is, their meaning is clear and there is no ambiguity or confusion.

﴿which are the foundation of the Book﴾ that is, they form the basic reference point in the light of which any ambiguous verse is to be understood, and they form the greater part of the Book.

﴿others are ambiguous﴾ that is, the meaning may not be clear to many people, because the wording is very general, or they may be misunderstood by some. To sum up, some of the verses are clear to everyone, and they are the majority that form the reference point for others; and there are other verses which may be unclear to some people. In that case what they must do is refer that which is ambiguous

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to that which is definitive, and that which is unclear to that which is clear. In that way, one will find that some parts of the Book confirm others and there will be no contradiction or conflict in meaning. But people are divided into two groups:

﴿but those in whose hearts is deviation﴾ that is, an inclination away from righteousness because of corrupt motives; their aim is to follow misguidance. Their hearts have deviated from the path of guidance.

﴿follow the part thereof that is ambiguous﴾ that is, they forsake what is definitive and clear, and go to that which is ambiguous. Thus they approach the matter backwards, trying to interpret that which is definitive in the light of what they want to understand from the ambiguous verses, which results in confusion.

﴿seeking [to cause] confusion﴾ to those whom they call to follow them, because that which is ambiguous may be interpreted in such a way as to cause confusion due to its ambiguous nature. However, that which is clear and definitive cannot be a cause of confusion, because the true meaning is clear to anyone who seeks to follow the truth.

﴿and seeking an interpretation [that suits them]. But no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allah﴾. There are two opinions among the commentators as to whether the sentence ends with the word ﴿Allah﴾. The majority are of the view that it does end there; others are of the view that it continues, so that what is meant is, "But no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allah and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge." Both meanings are possible. If interpretation is aimed at finding out the truth about the matter and its real nature, then the correct opinion is to stop at the phrase ﴿except Allah﴾, because Allah has kept knowledge of the true meaning of the ambiguous verses to Himself, as in the case of the exact nature of the attributes of Allah and how they are, and the exact nature of the events that will occur on the Last Day, and so on. These are matters the true nature of which is known only to Allah. It is not permissible to try to understand the nature of these things, because that is something that cannot be

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known. Imam Mâlik (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about the verse:

﴿The Most Gracious rose over the Throne [in a manner that befits His Majesty].﴾ *(Tâ Hâ 20: 5)*

> The questioner said: How did He rise over it? Imam Mâlik said: The rising over is known (in linguistic terms), how (with regard to Allah) is not known, belief in it is obligatory, and asking about its nature is an innovation (bid'ah).

Something similar may be said concerning all the divine attributes to one who asks how they are; he should be told something similar to what Imam Mâlik said: that the attribute is known, but how it is, is not known; believing in it is obligatory and asking about its nature is an innovation. Allah has told us of it but He has not told us how it is. So we must be content with the limit that He has set for us. But those who have devious inclinations seek out these ambiguous and unclear matters and seek to discuss that which does not concern them; they put effort into trying to understand that which we cannot comprehend, because no one knows it except Allah. Those who are firmly grounded in knowledge believe in it, but they leave the meaning to Allah; they leave it to Him and thus are safe. However, if what is meant by interpretation is explanation and clarification, then the correct view is to connect ﴿those who are firmly grounded in knowledge﴾ to ﴿Allah﴾. Thus we may understand that interpreting that which is ambiguous in the light of that which is definitive, and removing the ambiguity, is a process that no one knows except Allah and those who are well grounded in knowledge. Hence they believe in it and refer it to the definitive texts and say: ﴿all of it﴾, both the definitive and ambiguous texts ﴿is from our Lord﴾, and there can be no contradiction in that which is from Him; rather it is harmonious, and some parts of it confirm and support one another. This points to an important major principle, which is that if they know that all of it is from Allah, and they are not sure about the exact meaning of

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an ambiguous verse, they know for certain that it is to be referred to the definitive verses, even if they do not know how to go about doing that. As Allah encourages people to submit to Him and believe in His rulings, and He has warned against following that which is ambiguous, He says:

﴿None will pay heed﴾ that is, no one will understand the admonition of Allah and accept His advice and teachings except ﴿people of understanding﴾ that is, people of sound reasoning, who are the best of people and the elite among the sons of Adam. The admonition reaches their minds, so they pay attention to what will benefit them and they do it, and they take note of what will harm them and they avoid it. But in the case of others, they are like dross in which there is no benefit and which produces nothing. No rebuke or reminder will benefit them because they are devoid of reason.

Then Allah (ﷻ) tells us about those who are firmly grounded in knowledge: they call upon Him and say: ﴿Our Lord, do not let our hearts deviate now after You have guided us﴾ that is, do not cause our hearts to incline away from the truth out of ignorance or stubbornness on our part; rather cause us to follow the straight path, to be guided and to guide others; make us steadfast in adhering to Your guidance and keep us safe from that which those who deviate suffer

﴿and bestow upon us mercy from Yourself﴾ that is, grant mercy by means of which You guide us to that which will help us to do good and will protect us from evil

﴿for You are the Bestower﴾ that is, You give in abundance and are very kind; Your generosity reaches all created beings.

﴿Our Lord, You will gather all people on the day of which there is no doubt; for Allah does not break His promise﴾. He will requite them for their deeds, both good and bad. Allah (ﷻ) praises those who are firmly grounded in knowledge for having seven attributes, which are the key to happiness. They are:

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1- Knowledge which is the way to reach Allah, for it explains His rulings and laws.
2- Deep knowledge, which does not refer to merely having some knowledge. Rather the one who has deep knowledge is the scholarly person who has certain knowledge and practises precise scholarship. Allah has taught him the apparent and hidden meanings (with regard to the rulings and so on). He is deeply immersed in the wisdom of Sharia in terms of knowing, shaping his character and acting upon it.
3- Allah describes such people as believers in His Book in its entirety, for they refer that which is ambiguous to that which is definitive. ﴿We believe in [the Book]; all of it is from our Lord﴾.
4- They ask Allah for well-being and protection from that which those who deviate suffer.
5- They acknowledge the blessings of Allah for having bestowed guidance upon them, as they say: ﴿Our Lord, do not let our hearts deviate now after You have guided us﴾.
6- Nevertheless, they ask Him for His mercy which leads to all that is good and wards off all that is evil. They seek His mercy by virtue of His name the Bestower (al-Wahhâb).
7- Allah tells us of their faith and certainty in the Day of Resurrection, and their fear of Him. This is what should motivate them to strive to protect themselves from falling into error.

Then Allah (ﷻ) says:



﴿إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ لَن تُغْنِىَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَٰلُهُمْ وَلَآ أَوْلَٰدُهُم مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ شَيْـًٔا ۖ وَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ
هُمْ وَقُودُ ٱلنَّارِ ﴿١٠﴾ كَدَأْبِ ءَالِ فِرْعَوْنَ وَٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ كَذَّبُوا۟ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَا فَأَخَذَهُمُ
ٱللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ شَدِيدُ ٱلْعِقَابِ ﴿١١﴾ قُل لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ سَتُغْلَبُونَ وَتُحْشَرُونَ إِلَىٰ

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جَهَنَّمُ ۚ وَبِئْسَ ٱلْمِهَادُ ﴿١٢﴾ قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ ءَايَةٌ فِى فِئَتَيْنِ ٱلْتَقَتَا ۖ فِئَةٌ تُقَٰتِلُ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَأُخْرَىٰ كَافِرَةٌ يَرَوْنَهُم مِّثْلَيْهِمْ رَأْىَ ٱلْعَيْنِ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ يُؤَيِّدُ بِنَصْرِهِۦ مَن يَشَآءُ ۗ إِنَّ فِى ذَٰلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُو۟لِى ٱلْأَبْصَٰرِ ﴿١٣﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٠-١٣)

3:10. As for those who disbelieve, neither their wealth nor their children will avail them at all against Allah; it is they who will be fuel for the fire,

3:11. as was the case with the people of Pharaoh and those who came before them. They rejected Our signs, and Allah seized them because of their sins. For Allah is severe in punishment.

3:12. Say to the disbelievers: You will be defeated and driven together to hell – what a wretched resting-place.

3:13. There has already been for you a sign in the two groups that met [in combat]: one was fighting in the cause of Allah, the other disbelieving [in Allah]; they saw them with their own eyes twice their number. But Allah supports with His help whomever He wills. In this is a lesson for those who have insight.

Here Allah tells us that those who disbelieve in Him and His Messengers, and reject His religion and His Book, are deserving of punishment, and indeed the most severe punishment, for their disbelief and their sins; their wealth and their children will not avail them at all, even though in this world they may be useful in warding off some of these calamities that may befall them. They say:

﴿...We are more abundant in wealth and children, and we are not going to be punished.﴾ *(Saba' 34: 35)*

– but on the Day of Resurrection there will appear to them from Allah that which they had not reckoned on.

﴿The evil consequences of what they have earned will become apparent to them, and the very thing [punishment] they used to ridicule will overwhelm them.﴾ *(az-Zumar 39: 48)*

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Children and wealth will have no value before Allah; rather what will benefit a person will be his faith in Allah and his righteous deeds, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿It is not your wealth or your children that bring you nearer to Us; but those who believe and do righteous deeds – it is they who will have a multiple reward for their deeds, and they will dwell secure in the high places in paradise.﴾ *(Saba' 34: 37)*

Here Allah tells us that the disbelievers are the fuel of hellfire, and they are the ones who will remain therein forever. That is the situation in which Allah says that no wealth or children will avail the disbelievers at all. This is the way in which Allah dealt with previous nations, as happened to Pharaoh, those who came before him and those who came after him of transgressors and tyrants, who had much wealth and many troops under their control, when they disbelieved in the signs of Allah and stubbornly denied the message that the Messengers brought. Allah seized them because of their sins, on the basis of justice on His part, not injustice. Allah punishes severely those who do that which incurs the punishment, namely disbelief and sins of various types and degrees of severity.

﴿Say﴾ O Muhammad (ﷺ) ﴿to the disbelievers: You will be defeated and driven together to hell – what a wretched resting-place﴾. This indicates that the believers will prevail; it is also a warning to the disbelievers. And it came to pass as Allah foretold; He granted victory to the believers over their enemies, the disbelievers among the polytheists, Jews and Christians, and He will continue to do this for His believing slaves and troops until the Day of Resurrection. In this there is a lesson; it is one of the visible miracles of the Qur'an. Allah tells us that in addition to being defeated in this world, the disbelievers will also be gathered on the Day of Resurrection in the abode of perdition. This is what they have brought upon themselves, and what a wretched resting-place and bad recompense will be theirs.

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﴿There has already been for you a sign﴾ that is, a great lesson ﴿in the two groups that met [in combat]﴾ on the day of Badr ﴿one was fighting in the cause of Allah﴾ namely the Messenger (ﷺ) and his Companions ﴿the other disbelieving [in Allah]﴾ namely the disbelievers of Quraysh who came out of their homes in insolence and arrogance, aiming to show off and to bar people from the path of Allah. Allah brought the two groups together at Badr, and the polytheists were many times greater in number than the believers. Hence Allah says: ﴿they saw them with their own eyes twice their number﴾ that is, the believers saw that the disbelievers were much more numerous than them, double their number or more; this is confirmed by the words ﴿with their own eyes﴾. But Allah helped and supported the believers, so they defeated (the enemy), killed their leaders and captured many of them. That only came about because Allah supports those who support His cause and humiliates those who disbelieve in Him. In this there is a lesson for those who have insight and sound reasoning, that the group that prevails is in the right and the other group is in the wrong; otherwise if one only examines and compares the number and arms of the two sides as they appear to be, he will be certain that it is impossible for this small group to prevail over this large group. But in addition to these visible means, there are greater means that lie beyond them and cannot be comprehended except by people of insight, who believe in Allah, put their trust in Him and have the confidence that He will suffice. Those greater means are His help and support that He gives to His believing slaves against His disbelieving enemies.

﴿ زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ ٱلشَّهَوَٰتِ مِنَ ٱلنِّسَآءِ وَٱلْبَنِينَ وَٱلْقَنَٰطِيرِ ٱلْمُقَنطَرَةِ مِنَ
ٱلذَّهَبِ وَٱلْفِضَّةِ وَٱلْخَيْلِ ٱلْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَٱلْأَنْعَٰمِ وَٱلْحَرْثِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ مَتَٰعُ ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ

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ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ وَٱللَّهُ عِندَهُۥ حُسْنُ ٱلْمَـَٔابِ ﴿١٤﴾ ۞ قُلْ أَؤُنَبِّئُكُم بِخَيْرٍ مِّن ذَٰلِكُمْ ۚ لِلَّذِينَ
ٱتَّقَوْا۟ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّـٰتٌ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَـٰرُ خَـٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا وَأَزْوَٰجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ
وَرِضْوَٰنٌ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ بَصِيرٌۢ بِٱلْعِبَادِ ﴿١٥﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَآ
إِنَّنَآ ءَامَنَّا فَٱغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَقِنَا عَذَابَ ٱلنَّارِ ﴿١٦﴾ ٱلصَّـٰبِرِينَ وَٱلصَّـٰدِقِينَ
وَٱلْقَـٰنِتِينَ وَٱلْمُنفِقِينَ وَٱلْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِٱلْأَسْحَارِ ﴿١٧﴾ ۞ (سورة آل عمران: ١٤-
١٧)

3:14. Fair-seeming to men is the love of pleasures, such as women and sons, heaped-up hoards of gold and silver, fine horses, and livestock and well-tilled land. These are the enjoyments of the life of this world; but with Allah is the best place to return to.

3:15. Say: Shall I tell you of something better than that? For those who are pious, there are gardens with their Lord, through which rivers flow, where they will abide forever, with pure spouses and the good pleasure of Allah. Allah is fully aware of His slaves,

3:16. those who say: Our Lord! We have indeed believed; forgive us, then, our sins, and protect us from the punishment of the fire:

3:17. Those who are patient, those who are truthful, those who are truly devout, those who are charitable, those who pray for forgiveness before dawn.

Here Allah tells us that love of worldly pleasures has been made fair-seeming to people. The things mentioned are singled out because they are the greatest pleasures in this world, and others are secondary to them. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, We have made all that is on earth as an adornment for it...﴾ *(al-Kahf 18: 7)*

As the things mentioned have been made fair-seeming to them, because of the excitement they generate, people become attached to them and their hearts become inclined to them, therefore they were

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divided into two groups according to their attitude towards these things. One group made pursuit of these things their main aim, thus it became the focal point of their thoughts, ideas and actions both visible and hidden, and it distracted them from the purpose for which they were created; they became like grazing animals, enjoying these pleasures and indulging their desires, not caring in what manner they acquired these things or disposed of them. For these people, these things became a cause of their ending up in the realm of suffering and torment. The second group understood the purpose of these things and realised that Allah has made them as a test and a trial for His slaves, so that it may be known who will give precedence to obeying and pleasing Him over his own pleasures and desires. In this case, they have made it a means of attaining success in the hereafter, and they enjoy what they enjoy in a manner that helps them to obey Him. Physically they are dealing with these things but their focus of mind is on something else. They understand that these things are as Allah says: ﴿the enjoyments of the life of this world﴾, so they take them as a means of reaching the hereafter and their *ḥasanât* (righteous deeds) increase thereby, thus giving them provision to help them in their journey towards their Lord.

This verse offers consolation to the poor who cannot afford these pleasures that the rich can afford. It is also a warning to those who are deceived by them and get carried away, and it discourages people of intelligence from pursuing them. This is followed by mention of the permanent abode and ultimate destination of the pious and righteous; Allah tells us that it is better than what is mentioned here, because in it there are lofty gardens with elegant dwellings and high chambers, various kinds of trees bearing all kinds of fruit, flowing rivers that will go wherever they want, and pure spouses who are free of any dirt, impurity or faults, visible or hidden; they will abide therein forever, thus their joy will be complete. Moreover, they will attain the pleasure

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of Allah which is the greatest blessing. Compare this sublime abode with the ignoble realm, then choose for yourself which is better.

﴿Allah is fully aware of His slaves﴾ that is, He knows what they have of good qualities and bad qualities, and what is best suited to their condition, so He helps whomever He wills among them and He leaves whomever He wills to his own devices.

Allah describes paradise perfectly, and He describes those who deserve it, namely those who fear Him by doing what He has enjoined and refraining from what He has forbidden. Part of their supplication is: ﴿Our Lord! We have indeed believed; forgive us, then, our sins, and protect us from the punishment of the fire﴾. They seek to draw closer to Allah by virtue of His favour upon them, as He guided them to believe, and they beseech Him to forgive them for their sins and to protect them from the evil consequences thereof, which is the punishment of the fire. Then He discusses further the nature of their piety or fear of Him:

﴿Those who are patient﴾ that is, they are steadfast in doing that which Allah loves of acts of obedience, and in refraining from disobedience towards Him; they bear with patience the divine decrees that cause them pain

﴿those who are truthful﴾ that is, sincere in faith and truthful in all they do and say

﴿those who are charitable﴾ and spend from that which Allah has provided to them on various causes to help the needy among their relatives and others

﴿those who pray for forgiveness before dawn﴾. Among their praiseworthy characteristics is their thinking little of themselves; they do not regard themselves as good enough or as being of any status; rather they regard themselves as sinners who fall short, so they seek forgiveness from their Lord and look for the times when supplications are more likely to be answered, such as the time before dawn. Al-Hasan said, "They extended their (night) prayers until dawn,

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then they sat asking their Lord for forgiveness." This passage speaks of how people are inclined towards the life of this world, then points out that it is nothing more than conveniences that will soon come to an end; this is followed by a description of paradise which is filled with delights. Thus the contrast between this world and the hereafter, and the superiority of the hereafter over this world, is highlighted, in order to point out that people should give precedence to the hereafter and strive for it. The people of paradise are described as pious, then the characteristics of piety are outlined so that one may measure oneself against that and see whether he is one of the people of paradise or not.




﴿ شَهِدَ ٱللَّهُ أَنَّهُۥ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ وَأُو۟لُوا۟ ٱلْعِلْمِ قَآئِمًۢا بِٱلْقِسْطِ ۚ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّ ٱلدِّينَ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ٱلْإِسْلَٰمُ ۗ وَمَا ٱخْتَلَفَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُو۟تُوا۟ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ إِلَّا مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَهُمُ ٱلْعِلْمُ بَغْيًۢا بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِـَٔايَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَرِيعُ ٱلْحِسَابِ ﴿١٩﴾ فَإِنْ حَآجُّوكَ فَقُلْ أَسْلَمْتُ وَجْهِىَ لِلَّهِ وَمَنِ ٱتَّبَعَنِ ۗ وَقُل لِّلَّذِينَ أُو۟تُوا۟ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْأُمِّيِّـۧنَ ءَأَسْلَمْتُمْ ۚ فَإِنْ أَسْلَمُوا۟ فَقَدِ ٱهْتَدَوا۟ ۖ وَّإِن تَوَلَّوْا۟ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ ٱلْبَلَٰغُ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ بَصِيرٌۢ بِٱلْعِبَادِ ﴿٢٠﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٨-٢٠)

3:18. Allah bears witness that there is no god but He, as do His angels and people of knowledge; He is the upholder of justice. There is no god but He, the Almighty, the Most Wise.

3:19. Verily the true religion in the sight of Allah is Islam. Those who were given the scripture did not differ except after knowledge had come to them, out of mutual envy and rivalry. But if any disbelieve in the revelations of Allah, then Allah is swift in reckoning.

3:20. So if they dispute with you, say: I have submitted my whole self to Allah and so have those who follow me. And say to those who were given the scripture and to the unlettered: Do

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you [also] submit yourselves? If they do, then they are rightly guided, but if they turn away, your duty is only to convey the message. Allah is fully aware of His slaves.

This is an affirmation from Allah (ﷻ) of His oneness (tawḥeed) in the strongest terms, because it is the testimony of Allah Himself and of the best of His creation, namely the angels and the people of knowledge. The testimony of Allah is based on definitive proof and evidence that point to His being one and that there is no God but He; the type of evidence that is found in the universe and in people's own creation points to this great principle (that there is only one God). If there was no evidence other than the fact that no one affirms His oneness but Allah supports him against the polytheists who deny His oneness, His great grace in that there is no blessing that people enjoy but it is from Him, the fact that no one could ward off harm except Him, and that all people are unable to bring benefits or cause harm to themselves or others – then this would be definitive proof of the oneness of Allah and the invalidity of associating others with Him. As for the testimony of the angels to that effect, we learn it from what Allah has told us about it and what His Messengers have told us. As for the testimony of the people of knowledge, that is because they are the reference point to be consulted in all religious matters, especially the most important, greatest and noblest matter, namely affirming the oneness of Allah (tawḥeed). All of them, from the first one to the last, agreed on that, called people to it and showed them the way that leads to it. So people are obliged to adhere to this matter (tawḥeed), concerning which testimony was given, and to act upon it. This indicates that the noblest of matters is knowledge of tawḥeed, because Allah has testified to it Himself and the best of His creation have also testified to it; testimony can only be based on knowledge and certainty. This indicates that whoever has not reached that level in knowledge of tawḥeed is not one of the people of knowledge.

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This verse highlights the importance of knowledge from many angles, such as the following:

- Allah singled them (the people of knowledge) out for the honour of testifying to the most important matter to which anyone may testify (namely tawḥeed).
- Allah mentioned their testimony alongside His own and that of the angels, which is sufficient honour.
- He describes them as people of knowledge, as they are the ones who are carrying this knowledge.
- He describes them as witnesses and proof against people, and made it binding upon people to adhere to the matter that was witnessed; thus Allah made them the cause of people adhering to belief in His oneness, so whoever follows that, the scholars will get part of the reward for it. This is the bounty of Allah that He bestows upon whomever He will.
- The fact that He includes the people of knowledge among the witnesses implies that they are praiseworthy and of good character, and that they are trustworthy and able to take care of that which He entrusted to them (namely affirmation of His oneness). As He affirmed His oneness, He also affirmed His justice and said: ﴿He is the upholder of justice﴾ that is, He is always just and fair in all His actions and in the disposal of His slaves' affairs. He is indeed on a straight path in what He enjoins and forbids, and what He creates and decrees. Then He reiterates the affirmation of His oneness: ﴿There is no god but He, the Almighty, the Most Wise﴾.

It should be noted that this principle, which is affirmation of the oneness of Allah and worshipping Him alone, is supported by textual evidence and by rational evidence, thus it becomes clearer than daylight to those who have deep insight.

With regard to textual evidence, everything in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) that enjoins and affirms belief

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in His oneness, and speaks of loving those who believe in it and hating those who do not believe in it, punishing them (the disbelievers), and condemns polytheism and those who believe in it, comes under the heading of textual evidence; almost the entire Qur'an affirms that. With regard to rational evidence, that may be understood just by thinking, contemplating and pondering, the Qur'an refers to that and points out much of this evidence.

One of the most important principles is acknowledging the Lordship (ruboobiyah) of Allah. The one who realises that He is the Creator, Provider and Controller of all things will reach the conclusion that He is the only One Who is to be worshipped, and worship should be directed only to Him. As this is the clearest and most important of matters, Allah (ﷻ) reiterates this evidence frequently in His Book. Another example of rational evidence that Allah is the only One to be worshipped, to the exclusion of all others, is that He alone bestows blessings and wards off harm. The one who realises that blessings, both apparent and hidden, great and small, come from Allah and that there is no harm, hardship or distress but He is the only One Who can ward it off, and that no one in creation has the power to bring benefit to or ward off harm from himself, let alone anyone else, will reach the certain conclusion that worshipping anything other than Allah is the falsest of falsehood and that worship should only be for the only One Who can bring benefits and ward off harm. Hence Allah often highlights this point in His Book. A further example of rational evidence to that effect is what Allah has told us about other deities that were worshipped instead of Him: they have no power to bring benefit or cause harm; they cannot help anyone else or even help themselves; they have no power of hearing and seeing; even if it is assumed that they can hear, it would avail them nothing; and they have other attributes which are indicative of their utter imperfection. What Allah has told us about Himself, of His majestic attributes, sublime actions, might, power and other attributes may be known

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from textual and rational evidence. The one who truly knows that knows that it is not befitting or appropriate to worship any but the Almighty Lord to Whom belong all perfection, all glory, all praise, all might and all pride; it is not befitting to worship created beings that are subject to control, imperfect, deaf and dumb, and have no understanding. Further rational evidence to that effect is found in what people see with their own eyes in the past and at present of how Allah honours those who affirm His oneness, and humiliates and punishes those who associate others with Him. That is because Allah has made affirming His oneness a means of attaining all that is good and warding off all that is harmful in both spiritual and worldly terms. He has made associating others with Him and disbelief a means of incurring punishment in both spiritual and worldly terms. Hence when He mentions the stories of the Messengers and their interactions with nations who were obedient or disobedient, and He tells us about the punishment of the disobedient and the salvation of the Messengers and those who followed them, after each story He says:

﴿...Surely, in that there is a sign...﴾ *(al-Baqarah 2: 248)*

– that is, a lesson that may be understood by those who reflect, for they will understand that belief in His oneness is the only way to attain salvation, and failure to do that leads to doom. This is the main rational and textual evidence that points to this important principle. Allah mentions it a great deal in His Book in various ways, so that the one who chooses faith will do so on the basis of clear evidence, and the one who chooses disbelief would do so despite the evidence that had been made clear to him. To Allah be all praise and thanks.

Then He affirms that He is the True God Who deserves to be worshipped, and He explains the religion through which people should worship Him and submit to Him; that is Islam, which is submission to Allah by declaring His oneness and obeying Him. This is the religion to which His Messengers called people and which is prescribed in His Books. No other religion is accepted from anyone. It is the religion

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that is based on sincerity towards Him in terms of love, fear, hope, turning to Him, beseeching Him and following His Messenger in all of that. This is the religion of all the Messengers; anyone who follows them is on their path. The People of the Book only differed after their Books had come to them, urging them to unite in following the religion of Allah, but they only differed out of enmity, envy and rivalry amongst themselves. Otherwise there had come to them the greatest reason that should have motivated them to follow the truth and give up dissent. This was the result of their disbelief, hence Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿Those who were given the scripture did not differ except after knowledge had come to them, out of mutual envy and rivalry. But if any disbelieve in the revelations of Allah, then Allah is swift in reckoning﴾. Allah will requite each person for his deeds, especially those who abandon the truth after having come to know it. Such a one deserves the stern warning and the painful punishment.

Then Allah (ﷻ) commanded His Messenger (ﷺ), when debating with the Christians and others who preferred a religion other than Islam, to say to them: ﴿I have submitted my whole self to Allah and so have those who follow me﴾ that is, I and those who followed me have affirmed and testified and submitted our own selves to our Lord; we have forsaken any religion other than the religion of Islam and we are certain that they (other religions) are false. This is aimed at making them lose hope of winning you over to their religion and reinforcing your beliefs when you come across specious arguments. It also offers proof to the one who is confused, because, as stated above, Allah referred to the testimony of the people of knowledge among His slaves to His oneness, so that they may provide evidence against others. The leader of the people of knowledge, the best of them and the most knowledgeable is our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), then after him come his followers of different levels. They are possessed of sound knowledge and mature thinking that is unmatched by anyone else; no one else even comes close to it. Once the oneness of Allah and

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His religion, to which the best and most knowledgeable of creation (the Prophet [ﷺ]) devoted himself, are proven on the basis of clear evidence, certainty will be attained and all doubts and uncertainty will be dispelled, and one will realise that all other religions are false. Hence Allah says: ﴿And say to those who were given the scripture﴾, namely the Christians and the Jews ﴿and to the unlettered﴾ namely the polytheists among the Arabs and others: ﴿Do you [also] submit yourselves? If they do﴾ that is, if they believe the same as you believe, ﴿then they are rightly guided﴾ as you are rightly guided, and they become your brothers with the same rights and duties as you have. ﴿but if they turn away﴾ from Islam, and are content with other religions, ﴿your duty is only to convey the message﴾ and your reward is due from your Lord. Proof has been established against them and there is nothing left after that but the requital of punishment for their sins. Hence Allah says: ﴿Allah is fully aware of His slaves﴾.




﴿إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِـَٔايَـٰتِ ٱللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ ٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَيَقْتُلُونَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَأْمُرُونَ بِٱلْقِسْطِ مِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ فَبَشِّرْهُم بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٢١﴾ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَـٰلُهُمْ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْـَٔاخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُم مِّن نَّـٰصِرِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٢١-٢٢)

3:21. As to those who reject the revelations of Allah and unjustifiably slay the Prophets, and slay those of humankind who enjoin justice among the people, give them the tidings of a painful punishment.

3:22. They are those whose deeds will come to nothing in this world or in the hereafter and they will have no helpers.

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These are the ones of whom Allah tells us, in this verse, that they are the worst of people in terms of sin, and what sin can be worse than rejecting the revelations of Allah which are definitive proof of the truth? Those who reject them are the worst in terms of disbelief and stubbornness; they killed the Prophets of Allah who have the greatest rights over people after Allah, for Allah enjoined that they should be obeyed, believed, respected, honoured and supported. But these people did the opposite of that; they also killed those who enjoined justice upon people, which is enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, which in fact is kindness and sincerity to the ones to whom this advice is addressed. But they responded in the worst manner, and thus they deserve the worst punishment for this evil offence; that is the most indescribably painful and severe punishment, one that hurts bodies, hearts and souls. Moreover, their deeds are rendered invalid because of what their hands have earned and they will have no one to help them against the punishment of Allah or to ward off His wrath and punishment in the slightest. Rather, they will lose hope of all good, and everything that is evil or harmful will befall them. This applies to the Jews and others like them, whom Allah has cursed for their audacity against Allah, His Prophets and His righteous slaves.




﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ نَصِيبًا مِّنَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَىٰ كِتَٰبِ ٱللَّهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّىٰ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ وَهُم مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا۟ لَن تَمَسَّنَا ٱلنَّارُ إِلَّآ أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَٰتٍ ۖ وَغَرَّهُمْ فِى دِينِهِم مَّا كَانُوا۟ يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جَمَعْنَٰهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيهِ ۖ وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٢٣-٢٥)

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3:23. Have you not seen those who have been given a portion of the Book? They are invited to the Book of Allah, so it may judge between them, but a group of them turn away in aversion.

3:24. That is because they say: The fire will only touch us for a few days. Thus the lies they fabricated have deceived them with regard to their own religion.

3:25. But how [will they fare] when We gather them together on a day about which there is no doubt, and each soul will be paid in full for what it has earned, and none will be wronged?

Here Allah tells us about the People of the Book whom Allah blessed with His Book. It was incumbent upon them to be those who most closely adhered to it and were quickest to submit to its rulings. But, Allah tells us, when they are called to comply with the ruling of the Book, some of them turn away in aversion; they turn away physically and mentally. That is the utmost criticism which contains an implicit warning to us, lest we do what they did, in which case we would be subject to the same criticism and punishment. Rather what is required of everyone, if he is called to the Book of Allah, is to hear and obey, and submit, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿The only response of the believers, when they are called to Allah and His Messenger so that he may judge between them, is to say: We hear and we obey...﴾ *(an-Noor 24: 51)*

The reason why the People of the Book were deceived into such audacity in disobeying Allah is that they said: ﴿The fire will only touch us for a few days. Thus the lies they fabricated have deceived them with regard to their own religion﴾. They fabricated these words and thought that they were true, so they based their actions on that and did not refrain from falling into sin, because they had developed wishful thinking; they were deceived by thinking that their ultimate destiny was paradise, but they were lying for that was no more than lies and fabrications. Rather their ultimate destiny is the worst of

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destinies, and the consequences of their actions will be extremely severe. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿But how [will they fare] when We gather them together on a day about which there is no doubt﴾ that is, how will they be when they are faced with the evil consequences of their deeds on that day? Their situation will be indescribably and unimaginably awful, because that day is the day when all people will be paid in full for what they earned; the requital will be on the basis of justice, not injustice. It is already established that the requital will be in accordance with the deeds. We have seen above that some of their deeds indicate that they will be among those who are most severely punished.




﴿ قُلِ ٱللَّهُمَّ مَٰلِكَ ٱلْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِى ٱلْمُلْكَ مَن تَشَآءُ وَتَنزِعُ ٱلْمُلْكَ مِمَّن تَشَآءُ وَتُعِزُّ مَن تَشَآءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَن تَشَآءُ ۖ بِيَدِكَ ٱلْخَيْرُ ۖ إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ تُولِجُ ٱلَّيْلَ فِى ٱلنَّهَارِ وَتُولِجُ ٱلنَّهَارَ فِى ٱلَّيْلِ ۖ وَتُخْرِجُ ٱلْحَىَّ مِنَ ٱلْمَيِّتِ وَتُخْرِجُ ٱلْمَيِّتَ مِنَ ٱلْحَىِّ ۖ وَتَرْزُقُ مَن تَشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٢٦-٢٧)

3:26. Say: O Allah, Lord of all dominion, You grant dominion to whomever You will, and You take away dominion from whomever You will; You grant honour to whomever You will, and You humiliate whomever You will. In Your Hand is all good. Verily, You have power over all things.

3:27. You cause the night to encroach upon the day, and the day to encroach upon the night; You bring forth the living from the dead, and You bring forth the dead from the living; and You grant provision to whomever You will without measure.

Here Allah says to His Prophet (ﷺ): ﴿Say: O Allah, Lord of all dominion﴾ that is, You are the Sovereign, the Lord of all realms; absolute possession and control is only for You; all realms, in heaven

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and on earth, are Yours and all control is Yours. Then Allah highlights some of the ways in which He alone controls all affairs, as He says: ﴿You grant dominion to whomever You will, and You take away dominion from whomever You will﴾. This indicated that Allah (ﷻ) would take away dominion from Caesar and Chosroes and those who followed them, and would give it to the Ummah of Muhammad (ﷺ). And Allah did indeed do that, to Him be praise. Dominion may be granted or taken away in accordance with the will of Allah (ﷻ). This does not contradict the laws of cause and effect, whether in universal or religious terms, that what Allah has decreed should be the means of attaining, keeping or losing dominion. All of that is connected to the will of Allah, and there is no cause or measure that can lead independently to the effect; rather all causes are connected to the divine will and decree. Among the causes that Allah has decreed should be means of attaining dominion are faith and righteous deeds, unity among the Muslims, preparing whatever weapons can be acquired, being patient and avoiding division. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Allah has promised those among you who believe and do righteous deeds that He will surely make them successors [to power] in the land, as He made those before them successors...﴾ *(an-Noor 24: 55)*

Thus Allah tells us that faith and righteous deeds are the means of attaining power, as mentioned in this verse. Allah says:

﴿...He it is Who strengthened you with His help and with [the support of] the believers. He brought their hearts together...﴾ *(an-Anfâl 8: 62-63)*

﴿O you who believe, when you meet an [enemy] troop, stand firm and remember Allah much, so that you may triumph. And obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not dispute, lest you lose heart and your strength desert you. And be steadfast, for Allah is with those who are steadfast.﴾ *(al-Anfâl 8: 45-46)*

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Here Allah tells us that the unity and steadfastness of the believers, and their avoidance of division, are the means of attaining victory over their enemies. If you study the history of Muslim nations, you will find that the main cause of their decline is drifting away from Islam and division amongst themselves, which encouraged their enemies to attack them and made them turn against one another.

Then Allah says: ﴿You grant honour to whomever You will﴾ by virtue of his obedience to You ﴿and You humiliate whomever You will﴾ because of his disobedience towards You.
﴿Verily, You have power over all things﴾ and nothing is beyond You; rather all things are under Your control and power.

﴿You cause the night to encroach upon the day, and the day to encroach upon the night﴾ that is, You cause the one to encroach upon the other, and vice versa, which results in the change of seasons, light, sunshine, shade, stagnation and spreading out. This is one of the greatest signs of Allah's might, greatness, wisdom and mercy.

﴿You bring forth the living from the dead﴾, such as the chicken from the egg, trees and crops from the seeds, the believer from the disbeliever
﴿and You bring forth the dead from the living﴾ such as the egg from the bird, the seed from the tree, the grain from the crop, the disbeliever from the believer. This is the greatest sign of Allah's might, which demonstrates that all things are subjugated and are controlled, and nothing has any control over anything. The fact that Allah (ﷻ) created opposites, and created some things from their opposites, indicates that all things are subjugated to His control.

﴿and You grant provision to whomever You will without measure﴾ that is, You grant abundant provision to whomever You will, from sources he never thought of and never earned anything from them before.

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﴿لَا يَتَّخِذِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ أَوْلِيَآءَ مِن دُونِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۖ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَٰلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ فِى شَىْءٍ إِلَّآ أَن تَتَّقُوا۟ مِنْهُمْ تُقَىٰةً ۗ وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ ٱللَّهُ نَفْسَهُۥ ۗ وَإِلَى ٱللَّهِ ٱلْمَصِيرُ ﴿٢٨﴾ قُلْ إِن تُخْفُوا۟ مَا فِى صُدُورِكُمْ أَوْ تُبْدُوهُ يَعْلَمْهُ ٱللَّهُ ۗ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُّحْضَرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِن سُوٓءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُۥٓ أَمَدًۢا بَعِيدًا ۗ وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ ٱللَّهُ نَفْسَهُۥ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ رَءُوفٌۢ بِٱلْعِبَادِ ﴿٣٠﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٢٨-٣٠)

3:28. Let not the believers take for allies disbelievers instead of believers, for anyone who does that has no connection with Allah at all, except when you need to protect yourselves from them. Allah admonishes you to fear Him, for to Allah is the return [of all].

3:29. Say: Whether you conceal what is in your hearts or disclose it, Allah knows it all: He knows what is in the heavens and what is on earth. And Allah has power over all things.

3:30. On the day when every soul will find itself faced with all the good it has done, and all the evil it has done, it will wish there were a great distance between it and its evil. But Allah admonishes you to fear Him. And Allah is Most Compassionate towards His slaves.

Here Allah forbids the believers to take the disbelievers as allies, close friends or supporters, seeking their help in any matter pertaining to the Muslims, and He issues a stern warning against doing that: ﴿anyone who does that has no connection with Allah at all﴾ that is, he is cut off from Allah and has no share in the religion of Allah, because taking disbelievers as allies and close friends is contradictory to faith. That is because faith enjoins taking Allah and His close friends, the

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believers, as allies, helping one another to establish the religion of Allah and fighting in jihad against His enemies. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿The believers, men and women, are allies of one another...﴾ *(at-Tawbah 9: 71)*

So whoever takes the disbelievers as allies instead of the believers, aligning himself with those who want to extinguish the light of Allah and persecute His close friends, has left the party of the believers and joined the party of the disbelievers. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...Whoever among you takes them as allies is indeed one of them...﴾ *(al-Mâ'idah 5: 51)*

This verse indicates that we should keep our distance from the disbelievers, not mix with them, befriend them, incline towards them or trust them; the disbeliever should not be appointed to a position of authority over the Muslims and his help should not be sought in matters pertaining to the public interests of the Muslims.

﴿except when you need to protect yourselves from them﴾ that is, when you fear for your lives, then it is permissible to do that which will protect you by saying or making a show of that which will bring about protection.

﴿Allah admonishes you to fear Him﴾ that is, do not expose yourselves to His wrath by committing sins for which He will punish you.

﴿for to Allah is the return [of all]﴾ that is, all people will return to Him on the Day of Resurrection, when He will examine their deeds, bring them to account for them, and requite them accordingly. So beware of doing abhorrent deeds that will incur punishment; rather do that which will bring reward. Then Allah tells us of the vastness of His knowledge, which encompasses what is in their hearts in particular, and what is in heaven and on earth in general; and of the perfect nature of His power, which indicates that people should strive to purify their hearts and bear in mind the knowledge of Allah at all times, so that

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the individual will feel too shy before his Lord to let Him see his heart filled with bad thoughts; rather he will focus his thoughts on that which will bring him closer to Allah, such as pondering a verse of the Qur'an or a hadith of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), or thinking of and seeking knowledge that may benefit him, or contemplating the creation and blessings of Allah, or offering sincere advice to the slaves of Allah. It is appropriate, in the context of Allah informing us of His knowledge and power, to speak of what implies the requital for deeds, which will take place on the Day of Resurrection, when people will be requited in full for their deeds. Hence Allah says:

﴿On the day when every soul will find itself faced with all the good it has done﴾ that is, in full and complete, not lacking in the slightest, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it.﴾ *(az-Zalzalah 99: 7)*

The word good (*khayr*) refers to everything that brings one closer to Allah of righteous deeds both great and small; similarly, the word evil (*saw'*) refers to everything that incurs the wrath of Allah of bad deeds both great and small.

﴿and all the evil it has done, it will wish there were a great distance between it and its evil﴾, because of its great sorrow and regret. So people should beware of doing evil deeds that will inevitably lead to great regret, and give them up in this world whilst they are still able to do so, before one says:

﴿...Alas! I neglected my duty towards Allah...﴾ *(az-Zumar 39: 56)*

﴿On that day, those who disbelieved and disobeyed the Messenger will wish that the earth could be levelled over them...﴾ *(an-Nisā' 4: 42)*

﴿On that day, the wrongdoer will bite on his hands and say: Would that I had taken a path with the Messenger.﴾ *(al-Furqân 25: 27)*

﴿Then when [such a one] comes to Us, he will say [to his devil companion]: Would that there was between me and you the distance

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between east and west. What a wretched companion!﴾ *(az-Zukhruf 43: 38)*

By Allah, giving up every desire and pleasure, even if it is difficult to do so in this world, is easier than suffering all these pains and exposure before people (on the Day of Judgement). But because of wrongdoing and ignorance, a person may focus only on the present moment and not have the rational thinking to see the consequences and thus do that which would benefit him in this world and in the hereafter, and refrain from that which will harm him in both realms. Then Allah reiterates the admonition to fear Him, out of kindness and mercy towards us, lest our hearts become hard with the passage of time. This is a combination between encouragement that leads to hope and righteous deeds and warnings that lead to fear of Allah and giving up sin, as He says:
﴿But Allah admonishes you to fear Him. And Allah is Most Compassionate towards His slaves﴾.

We ask Him to bless us with consciousness of Him at all times, so that we will not do that which incurs His wrath and punishment.

 

﴿ قُلْ إِن كُنتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ ٱللَّهَ فَٱتَّبِعُونِى يُحْبِبْكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٣١)

3:31. Say: If you love Allah then follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins: For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

This verse speaks of the obligation to love Allah and explains the signs, consequences and fruits thereof.

﴿Say: If you love Allah﴾ that is, you claim this lofty status, above which there is no other, but it is not sufficient to make mere claims;

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rather it is essential to be sincere in that claim. The sign of such sincerity is following His Messenger (ﷺ) in all matters, in word and deed, in both major and minor issues of religion, inwardly and outwardly; if an individual follows the Messenger, this indicates that he is sincere in his claim to love Allah (ﷻ), and Allah will love him, forgive his sins, have mercy on him and guide him in all that he does and does not do. But the one who does not follow the Messenger does not truly love Allah, because loving Allah requires him to follow His Messenger; so long as that is not the case, this indicates that that love is not present and that he is lying in his claim. Even if that love did exist, it would not benefit him without fulfilling the necessary conditions. This verse sets the standard against which all people may be measured; the extent to which they follow the Messenger is indicative of their faith and love for Allah, and any shortcoming in that reflects a shortcoming in loving Allah.

﴿ قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ ۖ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٣٢)

3:32. Say: Obey Allah and the Messenger: But if they turn away, Allah does not love the disbelievers.

This is a command from Allah to His slaves in very general terms. The command is to obey Him and His Messenger, by means of which one enters faith and embraces belief in the oneness of Allah; all minor issues regarding actions and words, both visible and hidden, are based on that. Indeed, obedience to Him and to His Messenger includes avoiding that which He has prohibited, because avoiding it in obedience to the command of Allah is part of obeying Him. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, it is they who are the successful.

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﴿But if they turn away﴾ that is, if they turn away from obeying Allah and His Messenger, there is no recourse for them except disbelief and obedience to every rebellious devil:

﴿About whom it is decreed that whoever takes him as an ally, he will lead him astray and guide him to the punishment of the raging fire.﴾ *(al-Ḥajj 22: 4)*

Hence Allah says: ﴿But if they turn away, Allah does not love the disbelievers﴾; rather He hates them and despises them, and punishes them in the severest manner. It is as if this verse is explaining what it means to follow His Messenger, which is by obeying Allah and obeying His Messenger. This is following in the true sense.




﴿ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱصْطَفَىٰٓ ءَادَمَ وَنُوحًا وَءَالَ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَءَالَ عِمْرَٰنَ عَلَى ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾ ذُرِّيَّةًۢ بَعْضُهَا مِنۢ بَعْضٍ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ إِذْ قَالَتِ ٱمْرَأَتُ عِمْرَٰنَ رَبِّ إِنِّى نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِى بَطْنِى مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّىٓ ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّى وَضَعْتُهَآ أُنثَىٰ وَٱللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعَتْ وَلَيْسَ ٱلذَّكَرُ كَٱلْأُنثَىٰ ۖ وَإِنِّى سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّىٓ أُعِيذُهَا بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا مِنَ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ ٱلرَّجِيمِ ﴿٣٦﴾ فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنۢبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا ۖ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا ٱلْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِندَهَا رِزْقًا ۖ قَالَ يَٰمَرْيَمُ أَنَّىٰ لَكِ هَٰذَا ۖ قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٣٣-٣٧)

3:33. Allah chose Adam and Nooḥ, the family of Ibrâheem, and the family of 'Imrân above all of creation.[23]

3:34. They were descendants one of another. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

[23] Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is the best of Allah's creation, and he is included in the family of Ibrâheem mentioned here.

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3:35. [Remember] when the wife of 'Imrân said: O my Lord, I dedicate entirely unto You what is in my womb, so accept this from me, for You are the All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

3:36. When she gave birth, she said: O my Lord, I have given birth to a female! – and Allah knew best what she had given birth to – and the male is not like the female. I have named her Maryam, and I seek refuge with You for her and her offspring from the accursed Shaytân.

3:37. Her Lord graciously accepted her and caused her to grow in a good manner, and entrusted her to the care of Zakariyâ. Every time Zakariyâ entered the chamber to see her, he found some provisions with her. He said: O Maryam, where has this come from? She said: From Allah; for Allah grants provision without measure to whomever He will.

Here Allah tells us about those whom He selected among His close friends, beloved and chosen ones. He tells us that he chose Adam above all other created beings; He created him with His own Hand and breathed into him a spirit created by Him; he instructed the angels to prostrate to him and caused him to dwell in His paradise; He gave him knowledge, forbearance and virtue by means of which he superseded all other created beings. Hence Allah favoured his descendants and said:

﴿We have indeed honoured the sons of Adam, given them means of transportation on land and sea, provided them with good things, and have favoured them above many of those whom We have created.﴾ *(al-Isrâ' 17: 70)*

He chose Nooḥ and made him the first Messenger to the people of earth, when they began to worship idols, and He gave him patience, perseverance and gratitude that enabled him to call the people to Allah at all times. Hence Allah chose him and brought him close to Him, and He caused the people of earth to drown in response to his

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prayer, but He saved him and those who were with him in the laden ark, and made his progeny the survivors. Thus He caused him to be remembered and praised in all eras.

He chose the family of Ibrâheem, who was the close friend of the Most Merciful whom Allah favoured by choosing him to be His close friend. He offered himself to be thrown into the fire, he offered his son to be sacrificed and he offered his wealth to honour his guests. He called people to his Lord, night and day, in private and in public. Allah made him an example to be followed by those who came after him, and He ordained that prophethood and the Book should be among his descendants. All the Prophets who came after him are regarded as being of the family of Ibrâheem, because they were his descendants. Allah singled them out for all kinds of noble traits by virtue of which they were the best of creation. Among them was the leader of the children of Adam, our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Allah (ﷻ) combined in him all the perfect qualities that were scattered among others, and he superseded the first and the last; he is the leader of the Messengers, the chosen one from among the children of Ibrâheem.

Allah chose the family of 'Imrân, who was either the father of Maryam bint 'Imrân, or the father of Moosâ ibn 'Imrân (عليه السلام). These families who were mentioned by Allah are the best of creation, and righteousness and guidance were handed down from one generation to another of their descendants. Hence Allah says: ﴿They were descendants one of another﴾ that is, they were connected by bonds of blood ties and sharing similar sublime characteristics, as Allah said, after mentioning a number of Prophets who were members of those great families:

﴿And [We guided] some of their forefathers, progeny and brothers; We chose them and guided them to a straight path.﴾ *(al-An'âm 6: 87)*

﴿And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing﴾ – He knows who deserves to be chosen, so He chooses him, and who does not deserve to be chosen, so He forsakes him and lets him get carried away (in

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misguidance), and causes his doom. This indicates that He chose these people on the basis of what He knew about their characters that made them entitled to receive His generosity and bounty.

The wisdom that we learn from this story about these chosen ones is that we should love them and follow their example, and we should ask Allah to help and guide us as He did for them. We should always strive hard to emulate them and try to acquire their noble characteristics and traits. This is also by virtue of Allah's kindness towards them, that they are praised among the earlier and later generations, which highlights their high status. How great is His generosity and kindness; how many benefits one may attain from staying close to Him. If they had no honour except the fact that the memory of them and their noble attributes is eternal, that would be sufficient honour.

When Allah mentions the virtues of these noble families, He also tells us what happened to Maryam, the mother of 'Eesâ, and how Allah took care of her as she was growing up. He said:

﴿[Remember] when the wife of 'Imrân﴾ that is the mother of Maryam, ﴿said﴾ when she became pregnant: ﴿O my Lord, I dedicate entirely unto You what is in my womb﴾ that is, I dedicate what is in my womb sincerely for Your sake, to serve You and Your House. ﴿so accept this﴾ that is, this blessed deed ﴿from me, for You are the All-Hearing, All-Knowing﴾; You hear my prayer and You know my intention. This was when she was still in the uterus and had not yet been born.

﴿When she gave birth, she said: O my Lord, I have given birth to a female!﴾ It was as if she was hoping that the infant would be male, because he would be more able to offer greater service. In her words there is a kind of apology to her Lord. But Allah said: ﴿– and Allah knew best what she had given birth to﴾ that is, there was no need for her to tell Him; rather He knew about her before her mother knew what she was

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﴿and the male is not like the female. I have named her Maryam﴾. This indicates that the male is preferred to the female, and that the child may be named at the time of birth, and that the mother may give the child his or her name, if the father does not object.
﴿and I seek refuge with You for her and her offspring from the accursed Shaytân﴾. She prayed for her and her offspring, asking Allah to protect them from the accursed Shaytân.

﴿Her Lord graciously accepted her﴾ that is, He accepted the vow and protected her and her offspring from Shaytân
﴿and caused her to grow in a good manner﴾ that is, she grew in a good manner physically and in terms of physical well-being and attitude, because Allah made Zakariyâ (ﷺ) available to look after her:
﴿and entrusted her to the care of Zakariyâ﴾. This was by Allah's kindness towards her, so that she would grow up in the best circumstances. So she grew up worshipping her Lord, and she superseded all women and devoted all her time to the worship of her Lord, remaining in her chamber or prayer place.
﴿Every time Zakariyâ entered the chamber to see her, he found some provisions with her﴾ that is, without any effort on her part; rather it was provision that Allah granted to her and with which Allah honoured her. Zakariyâ said to her: ﴿...where has this come from? She said: From Allah﴾ that is, by His grace and kindness
﴿for Allah grants provision without measure to whom He will﴾ that is, without any thought or effort on the individual's part. Allah (ﷻ) says:
﴿...Whoever fears Allah, He will grant him a way out [from difficulty], and will provide for him from where he does not expect...﴾ *(at-Talâq 65: 2-3)*

This verse indicates that miracles and extraordinary events may happen to the close friends of Allah, as has been mentioned in many reports, contrary to denials. When Zakariyâ saw what Allah had bestowed upon Maryam and what He had honoured her with of

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delicious provision that came to her without any effort on her part, he began to hope for a child himself. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says:




﴿هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ ۖ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِن لَّدُنكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً ۖ إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِيَحْيَىٰ مُصَدِّقًا بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا وَنَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَقَدْ بَلَغَنِيَ الْكِبَرُ وَامْرَأَتِي عَاقِرٌ ۖ قَالَ كَذَٰلِكَ اللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاءُ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَل لِّيَ آيَةً ۚ قَالَ آيَتُكَ أَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا رَمْزًا ۗ وَاذْكُر رَّبَّكَ كَثِيرًا وَسَبِّحْ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ ﴿٤١﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٣٨-٤١)

3:38. Thereupon Zakariyâ prayed to his Lord, saying: O my Lord! Grant unto me by Your grace righteous offspring, for You are the One Who hears every prayer.

3:39. While he was standing in prayer in the chamber, the angels called unto him: Allah gives you glad tidings of Yaḥyâ, who will believe in a word from Allah. He will be a leader and abstinent [from women], a Prophet from among the righteous.

3:40. He said: O my Lord, how can I have a son, when old age has overtaken me, and my wife is barren? He said: Thus Allah does whatever He wills.

3:41. He said: O my Lord! Give me a sign. He said: Your sign will be that you will not speak to people for three days except through gestures. So remember your Lord often, and glorify Him in the evening and in the morning.

Zakariyâ (عليه السلام) called upon his Lord, asking Him to bless him with righteous offspring, that is offspring who would be good in behaviour and attitude and well mannered, so that the blessings, both

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worldly and spiritual, would be completed by them. Allah answered his prayer; whilst he was standing in his chamber worshipping and beseeching his Lord, the angels called out to him: ﴿Allah gives you glad tidings of Yaḥyâ, who will believe in a word from Allah﴾ that is, in 'Eesâ (ﷺ), because he was created by means of a word from Allah ('Be!' and he was).

﴿He will be a leader﴾ that is, he will have such a beautiful and perfect character that he would be elevated to the position of a noble leader, and matters would be referred to him for advice and decisions.

﴿and abstinent [from women]﴾ that is, he is prevented from intimacy with women because he has no desire for them, as he is preoccupied with serving and obeying his Lord.

﴿a Prophet from among the righteous﴾. What tidings could be greater than tidings of this son with his perfect qualities, who would be a Prophet from among the righteous?

In his great joy, Zakariyâ said:

﴿O my Lord, how can I have a son, when old age has overtaken me, and my wife is barren?﴾ and either of these two matters could be a cause of not being able to have a child, so how about when both are present? But Allah told him that this would be a miracle, as He said: ﴿Thus Allah does whatever He wills﴾. Just as He has decreed that children come into being by various means, including procreation, if He wills to bring them into existence without the usual means, He will do so, because nothing is too difficult for Him. In haste and seeking certainty, Zakariyâ (ﷺ) said: ﴿O my Lord! Give me a sign﴾ that is, a sign that this child will come.

﴿He said: Your sign will be that you will not speak to people for three days except through gestures﴾ that is, your tongue will be prevented from speaking, without there being any physical problem, so you will only be able to communicate by means of gestures; this is a great sign, that you will not be able to speak. This is an amazing contrast: just as He may prevent causes from leading to effects even when

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they are present, He may also make things happen without the causes that would lead to them. This serves to demonstrate that all causes and means are subject to His will and decree. So Zakariyâ stopped speaking for three days, and Allah enjoined him to give thanks to Him and remember Him a great deal in the evening and in the morning. Then when he came out from his chamber to the people, he gestured to them that they should glorify Allah in the evening and in the morning, that is, at the beginning and end of the day.




﴿وَإِذْ قَالَتِ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ يَٰمَرْيَمُ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱصْطَفَىٰكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَٱصْطَفَىٰكِ عَلَىٰ نِسَآءِ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ يَٰمَرْيَمُ ٱقْنُتِى لِرَبِّكِ وَٱسْجُدِى وَٱرْكَعِى مَعَ ٱلرَّٰكِعِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ أَنۢبَآءِ ٱلْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ ۚ وَمَا كُنتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يُلْقُونَ أَقْلَٰمَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ يَكْفُلُ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا كُنتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٤٢-٤٤)

3:42. And [remember] when the angels said: O Maryam! Allah has chosen you and purified you – chosen you above the women of all nations [of her own time].

3:43. O Maryam, worship your Lord devoutly; prostrate and bow [in prayer] with those who bow.

3:44. This is an account of the unseen [the distant past], which We reveal to you [O Muhammad]; you were not with them when they cast lots with their pens, [to decide] who, from among them, should be the guardian of Maryam. Nor were you with them when they disputed about it.

Here Allah speaks of the virtue and high status of Maryam, and tells us that the angels addressed her and told her their message, saying:

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﴿O Maryam! Allah has chosen you and purified you﴾ from imperfections that could undermine your good character ﴿chosen you above the women of all nations﴾. The first choosing is because of her praiseworthy characteristics and righteous deeds; the second choosing is because she was favoured above the women of all nations, meaning that she was favoured either above the women of all nations of her own time, or in general terms, even though in the latter case some other women shared that status with her, such as Khadeejah, 'Â'ishah and Fâṭimah (*raḍiya Allâhu 'anhunna* – may Allah be pleased with all of them). Thus the fact that other women were also chosen later on does not contradict what is mentioned in this verse about Maryam. When the angels told her that Allah had chosen her and purified her, that was a great blessing and gift that required her to give thanks. Hence the angels said to her:

﴿O Maryam, worship your Lord devoutly﴾. What is meant by the word translated here as "devout" is persisting in obedience, with submission and humility.

﴿prostrate and bow [in prayer] with those who bow﴾. Prostration and bowing are singled out for mention because of their virtue and because they are indicative of the utmost submission to Allah. So Maryam did what she was instructed to do, in gratitude and obedience to Allah (ﷻ). As Allah told His Prophet (ﷺ) what He told him about Maryam, and how she followed the course that Allah had set for her, and this was one of the matters of the unseen that could only be known through revelation, He said:

﴿This is an account of the unseen [the distant past], which We reveal to you [O Muhammad]; you were not with them when they cast lots with their pens, [to decide] who, from among them, should be the guardian of Maryam﴾. That was when her mother took her to those who were in charge of Bayt al-Maqdis, and they disputed amongst themselves as to which of them would take charge of Maryam. They cast lots concerning her by throwing their pens into the river; the one

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whose pen was not carried away by the water would be her guardian. That fell to Zakariyâ, their Prophet and the best of them. As you, O Muhammad (ﷺ), told them of this story which neither you nor your people knew, this indicates that you are telling the truth and that you are indeed the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), so they are obliged to submit to you and follow your instructions, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿You were not there on the western side [of the mountain] when We decreed for Moosâ the commission...﴾ *(al-Qasas 28: 44)*




﴿ إِذْ قَالَتِ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ يَٰمَرْيَمُ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنْهُ ٱسْمُهُ ٱلْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ٱبْنُ
مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْءَاخِرَةِ وَمِنَ ٱلْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَيُكَلِّمُ ٱلنَّاسَ فِى ٱلْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا
وَمِنَ ٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لِى وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ يَمْسَسْنِى بَشَرٌ ۖ قَالَ كَذَٰلِكِ
ٱللَّهُ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ ۚ إِذَا قَضَىٰٓ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَيُعَلِّمُهُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ
وَٱلْحِكْمَةَ وَٱلتَّوْرَىٰةَ وَٱلْإِنجِيلَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ أَنِّى قَدْ جِئْتُكُم
بِـَٔايَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ ۖ أَنِّىٓ أَخْلُقُ لَكُم مِّنَ ٱلطِّينِ كَهَيْـَٔةِ ٱلطَّيْرِ فَأَنفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ
طَيْرًۢا بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَأُبْرِئُ ٱلْأَكْمَهَ وَٱلْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْىِ ٱلْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَأُنَبِّئُكُم
بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدَّخِرُونَ فِى بُيُوتِكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ فِى ذَٰلِكَ لَـَٔايَةً لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ
﴿٤٩﴾ وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَىَّ مِنَ ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةِ وَلِأُحِلَّ لَكُم بَعْضَ ٱلَّذِى حُرِّمَ
عَلَيْكُمْ ۚ وَجِئْتُكُم بِـَٔايَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ ﴿٥٠﴾ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ رَبِّى
وَرَبُّكُمْ فَٱعْبُدُوهُ ۗ هَٰذَا صِرَٰطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٥١﴾ ۞ فَلَمَّآ أَحَسَّ عِيسَىٰ مِنْهُمُ ٱلْكُفْرَ
قَالَ مَنْ أَنصَارِىٓ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ ۖ قَالَ ٱلْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنصَارُ ٱللَّهِ ءَامَنَّا بِٱللَّهِ ۖ وَٱشْهَدْ
بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ رَبَّنَآ ءَامَنَّا بِمَآ أَنزَلْتَ وَٱتَّبَعْنَا ٱلرَّسُولَ فَٱكْتُبْنَا مَعَ
ٱلشَّٰهِدِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَمَكَرُوا۟ وَمَكَرَ ٱللَّهُ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ خَيْرُ ٱلْمَٰكِرِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾ إِذْ قَالَ ٱللَّهُ

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يَٰعِيسَىٰٓ إِنِّي مُتَوَفِّيكَ وَرَافِعُكَ إِلَيَّ وَمُطَهِّرُكَ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ وَجَاعِلُ ٱلَّذِينَ
ٱتَّبَعُوكَ فَوْقَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوٓا۟ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ ۖ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ
فِيمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ فَأَمَّا ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ فَأُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا
وَٱلْءَاخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُم مِّن نَّٰصِرِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَأَمَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ
فَيُوَفِّيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ ذَٰلِكَ نَتْلُوهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ ٱلْءَايَٰتِ وَٱلذِّكْرِ
ٱلْحَكِيمِ ﴿٥٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٤٥-٥٨)

3:45. Remember [when] the angels said: O Maryam! Allah gives you glad tidings of a word from Him: his name will be the Messiah 'Eesâ, the son of Maryam, held in honour in this world and the hereafter and one of those granted nearness [to Allah].

3:46. He will speak to the people in the cradle and in maturity. And he will be one of the righteous.

3:47. She said: O my Lord! How will I have a son when no man has touched me? He said: Thus Allah creates what He wills. When He has decreed something, He merely says to it, 'Be!' and it is.

3:48. And Allah will teach him the Book and wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel.

3:49. And [will appoint him] a Messenger to the Children of Israel, [with this message]: I have come to you, with a sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allah's leave. And I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I bring the dead back to life, by Allah's leave; and I tell you what you eat, and what you store in your houses. Surely in that is a sign for you if you are believers;

3:50. [I have come] to confirm that which came before me of the Torah, and to make lawful to you some of the things which had been forbidden to you; I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, so fear Allah, and obey me.

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3:51. Verily Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is a straight path.

3:52. When 'Eesâ came to know of their disbelief, he said: Who will be my helpers in the cause of Allah? The disciples said: We will be helpers [in the cause] of Allah. We believe in Allah; bear witness that we are Muslims.

3:53. Our Lord! We believe in what You have revealed, and we follow the Messenger, so record us among those who bear witness [to the truth].

3:54. And [the disbelievers] plotted and planned, and Allah also planned, and Allah is the best of planners.

3:55. And [remember] when Allah said: O 'Eesâ, I will take you back and raise you up to Me and deliver you from those who disbelieve; I will make those who follow you superior to those who disbelieve, until the Day of Resurrection. Then you will all return unto Me, and I will judge between you concerning the matters about which you differed.

3:56. As for those who disbelieve, I will punish them with a severe punishment in this world and in the hereafter, and they will have no helpers.

3:57. As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, He [Allah] will give them their reward in full; but Allah does not love the wrongdoers.

3:58. This is what We convey to you of the signs and the wise admonition.

Here Allah tells us that the angels gave the greatest glad tidings to Maryam (peace be upon her), which was the 'Word of Allah', His slave and Messenger, 'Eesâ ibn Maryam. He was called the 'Word of Allah', because he came into being by virtue of a word from Allah, not by the usual means. Allah made him one of His signs and one of the wonders of His creation. Allah sent Jibreel (ﷺ) to Maryam, and he blew into the collar of her garment; thus the blessed breath

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from the pure angel entered into her, and Allah caused that pure soul to grow from it; thus he was a spiritual being, created from spiritual matter. Hence he was called a spirit created by Allah,

﴿held in honour in this world and the hereafter﴾ that is, he was of high status in this world, for Allah made him one of the Messengers of strong will, those who brought major laws and had many followers. Allah caused his fame to spread, filling the earth from east to west. And in the hereafter he is of high status before Allah; he will intercede like his fellow Prophets and Messengers, and it will become clear that he is superior to most of Allah's creation. Thus he will be one of those granted nearness to Allah, one of the closest of all creatures to their Lord; indeed he will be one of the prominent ones among those who are brought close to Allah.

﴿He will speak to the people in the cradle and in maturity﴾. This is something other than regular speech; what is meant is that he will speak to the people with regard to that which is in their best interests and will lead to their well-being. This is the speech of the Messengers. This confirms that he was a Messenger who was sent to call people to their Lord. His speaking to them in the cradle is one of the great signs of Allah from which the believers benefit, and which constitutes proof against the stubborn that he was the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds and that he was a slave of Allah; it was also a help to his mother, as it demonstrated that she was innocent of what she was accused of.

﴿And he will be one of the righteous﴾ that is, Allah blessed him by causing him to be righteous, one of those whom He blessed. These words brought many glad tidings to Maryam, in addition to what they say about the Messiah (ﷺ).

﴿She said: O my Lord! How will I have a son when no man has touched me?﴾ Usually a child can only be born as a result of intimacy, and this astonished her; however, she did not doubt the power of Allah (ﷻ).

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﴿He said: Thus Allah creates what He wills. When He has decreed something, He merely says to it, 'Be!' and it is﴾. So the angel told her that this was something extraordinary, created by the One Who says to everything that He wills, 'Be!' and it is. The one who is certain of that will no longer be astonished or amazed. In His wisdom, Allah (ﷻ) takes a gradual approach by telling His slaves of that which is strange as an introduction to that which is stranger. So He first of all mentioned the creation of Yaḥyâ ibn Zakariyâ, who was born to parents, one of whom was elderly and the other was barren. Then He mentioned something stranger and more amazing than that, which was the creation of 'Eesâ (عليه السلام) through a mother, without a father, in order to show to His slaves that He does what He wills, and that whatever He wills happens, and whatever He does not will does not happen.

Then Allah (ﷻ) speaks of the great blessing that He bestowed upon His slave and Messenger 'Eesâ (عليه السلام), as He said:

﴿And Allah will teach him the Book﴾. It may be that what is meant is books in general, thus the Torah and the Gospel are mentioned in specific terms because of their sublime status and virtue, and because they contain rulings and laws by which the Israelite Prophets ruled and in which there is a great deal of knowledge; hence they include knowledge of words and meanings. Or it may be that what is meant by the words ﴿And Allah will teach him the Book﴾ is literacy, because literacy is one of the greatest blessings that Allah bestows upon His slaves. Thus He reminds His slaves of His favour in teaching them the use of the pen, as mentioned in the first soorah that He revealed, as He said:

﴿Recite [commencing] with the name of your Lord Who created, created man from a clinging clot. Recite, for your Lord is the Most Generous, Who taught the use of the pen.﴾ *(al-'Alaq 96: 1-4)*

What is meant by wisdom is knowledge of the reasons behind the rulings and knowing how to do or say the right thing at the right time. Hence this is a reminder of Allah's blessings to 'Eesâ (عليه السلام), as He

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taught him literacy, knowledge and wisdom. This is what helps man to attain perfection. Then Allah refers to another quality of perfection, in addition to what Allah granted him of virtues, as He says:
﴿a Messenger to the Children of Israel﴾. Allah sent him to this virtuous people who were the best of the worlds at their time, to call them to Allah and show them signs to prove that he was indeed a Messenger of Allah and a true Prophet. Hence he said:
﴿I have come to you, with a sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay﴾ a bird; that is, he made it into the shape of a bird.
﴿and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allah's leave﴾ that is, a bird that has a soul and flies, by Allah's leave.
﴿And I heal those born blind, and the lepers﴾ by Allah's leave
﴿and I bring the dead back to life, by Allah's leave; and I tell you what you eat, and what you store in your houses. Surely in that is a sign for you if you are believers﴾. What sign could be greater than making an inanimate object come to life, healing people of ailments that doctors cannot treat, bringing the dead back to life and speaking of unseen matters? Each one of these on its own is a great sign, so how about when they are combined and confirm one another? That should be a cause of belief and faith.

﴿[I have come] to confirm that which came before me of the Torah﴾ that is, I have brought something similar to the Torah and what Moosâ brought. The sign of the truthful person is that what he tells people is similar to that which truthful people tell; he tells the truth and enjoins justice, without any contradiction in his words, unlike those who make false claims, especially with regard to the greatest claim, which is the claim of prophethood. The liar who makes a false claim thereof will inevitably demonstrate to everyone that he is lying, as he will contradict himself, and will say something that is different to what the truthful say and is in accordance with what liars say. This is what is dictated by the nature of things and as a result of divine wisdom and mercy, because the one who speaks the truth can

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never resemble a liar who makes false claims of prophethood. This is unlike some minor issues, where the words of one who speaks the truth may be confused with the words of the liar. But with regard to prophethood, the matter has to do with guidance or misguidance of people, and their ultimate fate (in paradise or hell). It is well known that the one who is truthful in his claim of prophethood is one of the most perfect of people, and the one who makes a false claim to that effect is one of the most ignoble, mendacious and evil of people. By virtue of the wisdom of Allah and His mercy towards His slaves, Allah has decreed that there should be a difference between them, so that the matter will be clear to anyone who can think rationally.

Then 'Eesâ (ﷺ) told them that the law of the Gospel is a law that is easy, as he said:

﴿and to make lawful to you some of the things which had been forbidden to you﴾. This indicates that most of the rulings of the Torah were not abrogated by the Gospel; rather it completed them and confirmed them.

﴿I have come to you with a sign from your Lord﴾ that proves my truthfulness and that you are obliged to follow me. This refers to the signs mentioned above. What all of this means is summed up in the words: ﴿so fear Allah﴾ by doing what He has enjoined and refraining from what He has forbidden. ﴿and obey me﴾, because obedience to the Messenger is obedience to Allah.

﴿Verily Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him﴾. 'Eesâ (ﷺ) referred to the concept of the oneness of divine Lordship (tawḥeed ar-ruboobiyah) which is acknowledged by everyone, in order to affirm the oneness of divinity (tawḥeed al-uloohiyah), which is denied by the polytheists. Just as Allah is the One Who created us, granted us provision and bestowed upon us blessings both apparent and hidden, He should be our (only) object of worship, to Whom we turn in love, fear and hope, calling upon Him and seeking His help, and to Whom we devote all kinds of acts of worship. This is a

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refutation of the Christians who say that 'Eesâ is God or the son of God; it is an affirmation on his part that he is a slave under orders and a created being, as he said:

﴿...Verily, I am a slave of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a Prophet.﴾ *(Maryam 19: 30)*

﴿When Allah says: O 'Eesâ son of Maryam, did you say to people: Take me and my mother as two gods besides Allah? He ['Eesâ] will say: Glory be to You! It is not proper for me to say that which I have no right [to say]. If I had said it, You would surely have known it... I said nothing to them except that which You commanded me [to say]: Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord...﴾ *(al-Mâ'idah 5: 116-117)*

﴿This﴾ that is, worshipping and fearing Allah and obeying His Messenger ﴿is a straight path﴾ that leads to Allah and to His paradise; anything other than that is a way that leads to hell.

﴿When 'Eesâ came to know of their disbelief﴾ that is, when he saw that they were not accepting what he said, and they said that it was obvious sorcery, and they thought of killing him and tried to do that, ﴿he said: Who will be my helpers in the cause of Allah?﴾ That is, who will help me and stand with me in support of Allah's religion? ﴿The disciples﴾, who were the helpers, ﴿said: We will be helpers [in the cause] of Allah﴾ that is, they offered their support and did that, and they said: ﴿We believe in Allah; bear witness that we are Muslims﴾.

﴿Our Lord! We believe in what You have revealed, and we follow the Messenger, so record us among those who bear witness [to the truth]﴾ that is, beneficial testimony, bearing witness to the oneness of Allah (tawḥeed) and believing in His Messenger, and adhering to that. When they stood with 'Eesâ in support of Allah's religion and established His laws, some of the Children of Israel believed whilst others disbelieved. Then the two groups fought, and Allah supported those who had believed against their enemies, and thus they were victorious. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says here:

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﴿And [the disbelievers] plotted and planned﴾ that is, the disbelievers plotted to kill the Prophet of Allah and extinguish His light
﴿and Allah also planned﴾ against them, as a requital to them for their plot.
﴿and Allah is the best of planners﴾. Thus Allah thwarted their plot and they became losers.

﴿And [remember] when Allah said: O 'Eesâ, I will take you back and raise you up to Me and deliver you from those who disbelieve﴾. So Allah took His slave and Messenger 'Eesâ up to Himself, and He made someone else look like him, so they [the disbelievers] took the one who had been made to look like him, and they killed him and crucified him and thus incurred great sin because of their intention to kill the Messenger of Allah. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...But they did not slay him or crucify him; rather [another man] was made to resemble him to them...﴾ *(an-Nisâ' 4: 157)*

This verse indicates that Allah is exalted above His creation and that He rose above His Throne in a real sense, as is indicated by the Qur'anic texts and hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ) which are accepted and believed in by ahl as-Sunnah. Allah is Almighty, Most Powerful, the Subduer, and by His might He prevented the Children of Israel, after they had decided to kill 'Eesâ (عليه السلام) and there was nothing to prevent them from doing so, from harming him, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...I restrained the Children of Israel from [harming] you when you brought them the clear signs and the disbelievers among them said: This is obviously nothing but magic!﴾ *(al-Mâ'idah 5: 110)*

Allah is most wise and does what is most appropriate; there is great wisdom behind His confusing the Children of Israel, and thus they crucified the one who was caused to look like 'Eesâ, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...Those who differ concerning this matter are in doubt concerning it, with no [certain] knowledge, but only conjecture to follow. But they certainly did not slay him.﴾ *(an-Nisâ' 4: 157)*

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Then Allah (ﷻ) said:

﴿I will make those who follow you superior to those who disbelieve, until the Day of Resurrection﴾. We have seen above that Allah supported the believers among them against the disbelievers, and the Christians who claimed to follow 'Eesâ (عليه السلام) continued to subdue the Jews, because the Christians were closer to following 'Eesâ than the Jews were. That continued until Allah sent our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ); then the Muslims became the ones who were truly following 'Eesâ, so Allah supported them and caused them to prevail over the Jews, Christians and all of the disbelievers, although at some times it may so happen that the disbelievers, Christians or others, gain the upper hand over the Muslims, in accordance with Allah's wisdom and as a punishment for failing to follow the Messenger (ﷺ).

﴿Then you will all return unto Me﴾ that is, the ultimate destiny of all creatures is to Him

﴿and I will judge between you concerning the matters about which you differed﴾. Everyone claims that the truth is with him, and that he is right and everyone else is wrong, but these are mere claims that require proof. Then Allah tells us that He will judge between them on the basis of fairness and justice.

﴿As for those who disbelieve﴾ that is, those who disbelieve in Allah, His revelations and His Messengers

﴿I will punish them with a severe punishment in this world and in the hereafter﴾. The punishment in this world is what Allah sent upon them of calamities, visible punishments, killing, humiliation and so on, as a foretaste of the punishment of the hereafter, and the punishment of the hereafter is the greatest calamity. Indeed, it is the punishment of the fire, the wrath of Allah and deprivation of reward.

﴿and they will have no helpers﴾ to protect them from the punishment of Allah, neither among those who they claim will intercede for them with Allah nor those that they take as protectors instead of Him. Neither their friends and relatives nor their own selves will help them.

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﴿As for those who believe﴾ in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the resurrection after death, and other things that Allah has enjoined us to believe in

﴿and do righteous deeds﴾ in their hearts, and in word and deed, as taught by the Messengers, seeking thereby the pleasure of the Lord of the worlds

﴿He [Allah] will give them their reward in full﴾. This indicates that they will be rewarded in this world for their good deeds, by way of honour, dignity, support and a good life, but the reward will be given in full on the Day of Resurrection, when they will find what they sent forth of good deeds rewarded abundantly. So He will give each one who did good deeds the reward of his deeds, and give them more by His grace and generosity.

﴿but Allah does not love the wrongdoers﴾; rather He hates them and subjects them to His wrath and punishment.

﴿This is what We convey to you of the signs and the wise admonition﴾. This is a great blessing to His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) and to his Ummah, as He sent down to them this wise admonition which is precise and clear, and explains in detail rulings, what is permissible and what is forbidden, and stories of the earlier Prophets and what Allah caused to happen at their hands of clear signs and astounding miracles. This Qur'an tells us everything that will benefit us of stories and rulings, from which we may increase in knowledge, learn lessons and find reassurance; this is the greatest mercy from the Lord of humanity.

Then Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿ إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ ءَادَمَ ۖ خَلَقَهُۥ مِن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ ﴿٥٩﴾ ٱلْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ ٱلْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٥٩-٦٠)

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3:59. The likeness of 'Eesâ before Allah is as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him, 'Be!' and he was.

3:60. This is the truth from your Lord, so do not be among those who doubt.

Here Allah establishes proof against the Christians who attribute to 'Eesâ (ﷺ) that which is not his, with no proof and no reason for confusion, and claim that as he did not have a father, he deserves to be the son of God or a partner in God's divinity. But this (the fact that he did not have a father) should not lead to any confusion, let alone form the basis of their argument, because his being created in this manner is one of the signs of Allah that indicate that Allah alone is the Creator Who is in control of all things, and that all causes that lead to effects are subject to His will and power. The fact that 'Eesâ was created with a mother only is more indicative of the opposite of their argument, and demonstrates that no one can be a partner or associate of Allah in any way whatsoever. Moreover, Allah created Adam (ﷺ) from dust, not from a father or a mother, and if that does not lead to the same conclusion as the Christians claimed about the Messiah, then it is more appropriate that the fact that the Messiah was created from a mother without a father should not lead to that conclusion. If the claim of prophethood and divinity can be made with regard to the Messiah, then the argument may be stronger with regard to Adam. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿The likeness of 'Eesâ before Allah is as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him, 'Be!' and he was. This is the truth from your Lord﴾ that is, what We have told you about the Messiah (ﷺ) is the truth that is at the highest level of authenticity, because it comes from your Lord; because He has bestowed special care upon you and your Ummah, He has told you stories of the Prophets (peace be upon them).

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﴿so do not be among those who doubt﴾ that is, those who are uncertain of something that your Lord has told you. This verse and those that follow it offer proof for an important principle, which is that where there is evidence that something is true and one is certain about it, whether it is an issue of belief (*'aqeedah*) or otherwise, he must be certain that everything that is contrary to it must be false and any argument in support of that opposing view is flawed, whether one is able to see the flaw or not. His inability to refute that argument should not make him doubt what he knows, because whatever is contrary to the truth is false. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...And what is there apart from truth but error?...﴾ *(Yoonus 10: 32)*

Following this principle will help one deal with many specious arguments that may be presented by philosophers and sophisticates; if a person tries to highlight the flaws, that is good but is not necessary; otherwise he should focus on his task, which is to explain the truth on the basis of evidence and call people to it.

 

﴿فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَكَ مِنَ ٱلْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا۟ نَدْعُ أَبْنَآءَنَا وَأَبْنَآءَكُمْ وَنِسَآءَنَا وَنِسَآءَكُمْ وَأَنفُسَنَا وَأَنفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَل لَّعْنَتَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَى ٱلْكَٰذِبِينَ ﴿٦١﴾ إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَهُوَ ٱلْقَصَصُ ٱلْحَقُّ ۚ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَٰهٍ إِلَّا ٱللَّهُ ۚ وَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَهُوَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلْحَكِيمُ ﴿٦٢﴾ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا۟ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلِيمٌۢ بِٱلْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٦١-٦٣)

3:61. If anyone disputes with you concerning him ['Eesâ], after the knowledge that has come to you, say: Come, let us gather together – our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves – then let us earnestly pray and invoke the curse of Allah on the liars.

3:62. This is the truth of the matter. There is no god but Allah. Verily Allah is the Almighty, the Most Wise.

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if the fighting is defensive, then it is permissible to fight during the sacred months as it is permissible in the sacred land.

This verse was revealed because of what happened to the expedition of 'Abdullâh ibn Jaḥsh, their slaying of 'Amr ibn al-Ḥaḍrami and their seizing of their wealth, which happened – according to reports – in the month of Rajab; the polytheists criticised them for fighting during the sacred months, but this was unfair criticism, because they had committed abhorrent deeds that were worse than that for which they were criticising the Muslims. Hence Allah (ﷻ) highlighted their abhorrent deeds:

﴿to bar others from the path of Allah﴾ – the polytheists sought to prevent those who wanted to believe in Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), persecuted those who did believe in Him, and strove to make them recant their religion and disbelieve in Him; all of this on its own is sufficient evil, so how about if it occurred during a sacred month and in a sacred land?

﴿to prevent access to the Sacred Mosque and to drive out its people from it﴾ that is, the people of the Sacred Mosque, namely the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions, because they were more deserving of it than the polytheists
﴿from it﴾ and they did not allow them to reach it, even though this House was made for all people, residents and visitors alike.

Each one of these matters on its own ﴿is worse than slaughter﴾ during the sacred month, so how about when they are combined? Thus it is known that they were wrong and unfair in their criticism of the believers.

Then Allah (ﷻ) tells us that they will not cease fighting the believers, and that their aim is not to take their wealth and kill them; rather their aim is to make the believers give up their religion and become disbelievers after having believed, so that they will become people of hell. They are striving their utmost, by all possible means, to achieve that aim.

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﴿They want to extinguish Allah's light with their utterances, but Allah insists on perfecting His light, even though the disbelievers hate it.﴾ *(at-Tawbah 9: 32)*

This description applies to all of the disbelievers; they will continue to fight others, until they make them give up their religion. This is especially true of the People of the Book, the Jews and Christians, who set up organisations, send preachers and medical doctors and build schools to attract other nations to their religion, and do their utmost to introduce ideas that make people confused about their religion.

What we hope is that Allah (ﷻ) – Who has blessed the believers with Islam, chosen for them His true religion, and perfected His religion for them – will complete His blessing to them by enabling them to adhere to it fully, that He will defeat everyone who wants to extinguish His light, that He will cause their plots to backfire, and cause His religion to prevail and His word to be supreme. This verse is applicable to the disbelievers of our own time as it was applicable to those who came before them.

﴿The disbelievers spend their wealth to bar [people] from the path of Allah, and they will continue to spend it, then it will become a source of regret for them, then they will be defeated, and as for those who disbelieve, into hell they will be gathered.﴾ *(al-Anfāl 8: 36)*

Then Allah tells us that for those who turn away from Islam, preferring disbelief, and persist in that until they die as disbelievers, ﴿their deeds will come to nothing in this world and in the hereafter﴾ because they did not fulfil the conditions of their deeds being accepted, which is being Muslim
﴿they will be inhabitants of the fire and will abide therein forever﴾. This verse indicates that if a person apostatises then comes back to Islam, the good deeds that he did before he apostatised will be restored to him. The same applies to one who repents from sin: his previous good deeds will be restored to him.

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3:63. But if they turn away, Allah is fully aware of those who spread mischief.

﴿If anyone disputes﴾ that is, argues ﴿with you﴾ about 'Eesâ (ﷺ), and claims that he is above being a slave of Allah, and raises him above his real status,

﴿after the knowledge that has come to you﴾, that he is indeed a slave of Allah and His Messenger, and you have explained to those who argue with you what you have of evidence that indicates that he is no more than a slave whom Allah has blessed, then this indicates that he is stubborn and has not accepted what you say about this issue that is based on certain knowledge. Hence there is no longer any benefit, either for you or for him, in arguing with him because the truth has become clear, so his arguing about it is the argument of a stubborn person who is opposing Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ); his aim is to follow his whims and desires, not to follow that which Allah has revealed, so this is a hopeless case. Hence Allah instructed His Prophet (ﷺ) to move onto challenging and invoking mutual curses: they were to call upon Allah and pray earnestly, asking Him to send His curse and punishment upon whichever of the two groups was lying, on (the leader) and on the most beloved of people to him, namely his children and womenfolk. So the Prophet (ﷺ) called upon them to do that, but they turned away and refused, because they realised that if they engaged in invoking mutual curses, they would go back to their families and children, and they would not find any families and any wealth, and the punishment would be brought forward for them. They were content with their false religion, even though they were certain that it was false. This is the utmost mischief and stubbornness. Hence Allah (ﷻ) said:

﴿But if they turn away, Allah is fully aware of those who spread mischief﴾ and He will punish them severely for that. Allah tells us that ﴿This﴾ that Allah has related to His slaves ﴿is the truth of the

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matter﴾, and any other story or statement that is told to the believer that contradicts this is false.

﴿There is no god but Allah﴾, hence He is the only object of worship Who is to be worshipped sincerely, and it is not appropriate to direct worship to anyone but Him; no one else deserves even an atom's weight of worship.

﴿Verily Allah is the Almighty﴾; He has subdued all things and everything submits to Him

﴿the Most Wise﴾; He is wise in all that he does or says, and His is the utmost wisdom in testing the believers with the disbelievers, by means of their fighting them, arguing with them and striving against them in word and deed.

 

﴿قُلْ يَٰٓأَهْلَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ تَعَالَوْا۟ إِلَىٰ كَلِمَةٍ سَوَآءٍۭ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِۦ شَيْـًٔا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا۟ فَقُولُوا۟ ٱشْهَدُوا۟ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٦٤)

3:64. Say: O People of the Book! Come to common terms between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, that we associate no partners with Him, and that we not take one another as lords besides Allah. If then they turn away, say: Bear witness that we are Muslims [those who submit to Allah].

That is, say to the People of the Book, the Jews and Christians: ﴿Come to common terms between us and you﴾ that is, let us agree on a word on which all the Prophets and Messengers are agreed, and no one differs from that except those who are stubborn and misguided, and it does not belong only to one party and not the other; rather it is something that we and you have in common. This is by way of fairness in discussion and argument. Then Allah explains that by saying:

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﴿that we worship none but Allah, that we associate no partners with Him﴾ that is, we worship Allah only, focusing all love, fear and hope on Him alone, and we do not associate any Prophet, angel, "saint", idol, graven image, animate being or inanimate object with Him ﴿and that we not take one another as lords besides Allah﴾; rather, all obedience is to Allah and His Messenger, so we do not obey created beings by disobeying the Creator, because that would be ascribing the status of lordship to those created beings.

When calling the People of the Book or others to that, if they respond then they are like you, with the same rights and duties; but if they turn away, then they are stubborn and are following their whims and desires, so let them bear witness that you are Muslims (those who submit to Allah). Perhaps the benefit of that is that if you say that to them, when you are the people of true knowledge, this will establish further proof against them, as Allah referred to the testimony of the people of knowledge in order to establish proof against those who are stubborn. Moreover, if you become Muslim and believe, Allah would not care that others do not submit, because they are wicked and have evil in their hearts. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say: Believe in it, or do not believe. Verily, those who were given knowledge before it, when it is recited to them, fall down on their faces in prostration.﴾ *(al-Isrâ' 17: 107)*

Moreover, when the specious arguments are presented in order to undermine belief and faith, that motivates the believer to renew his faith, affirm his Islam, announce his certainty and express gratitude for the blessing of his Lord.




﴿ يَٰٓأَهۡلَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ لِمَ تُحَآجُّونَ فِيٓ إِبۡرَٰهِيمَ وَمَآ أُنزِلَتِ ٱلتَّوۡرَىٰةُ وَٱلۡإِنجِيلُ إِلَّا
مِنۢ بَعۡدِهِۦٓۚ أَفَلَا تَعۡقِلُونَ ٦٥ هَٰٓأَنتُمۡ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ حَٰجَجۡتُمۡ فِيمَا لَكُم بِهِۦ عِلۡمٞ فَلِمَ

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تُحَآجُّونَ فِيمَا لَيْسَ لَكُم بِهِۦ عِلْمٌ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ مَا كَانَ إِبْرَٰهِيمُ يَهُودِيًّا
وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَٰكِن كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُّسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ إِنَّ أَوْلَى ٱلنَّاسِ
بِإِبْرَٰهِيمَ لَلَّذِينَ ٱتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَٰذَا ٱلنَّبِىُّ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ وَلِىُّ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٦٥-٦٨)

3:65. O People of the Book! Why do you dispute about Ibrâheem, when the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed until after him? Do you not understand?

3:66. Look at yourselves! You are the ones who disputed about that of which you have [a little] knowledge, but why do you dispute about matters of which you have no knowledge? Allah knows, but you do not know.

3:67. Ibrâheem was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a monotheist, a Muslim, and he was not one of those who ascribe partners to Allah.

3:68. Verily the closest of people to Ibrâheem are those who followed him, and this Prophet and those who believe. And Allah is the Guardian of the believers.

When the Jews claimed that Ibrâheem was a Jew, and the Christians claimed that he was a Christian, and they argued about that, Allah refuted their arguments on three counts:

1- Their argument about Ibrâheem was an argument about a matter of which they had no knowledge, hence it was not possible or allowable for them to argue about something that had nothing to do with them. They used to argue about the rulings mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel, whether they were right or wrong, but in this case they had no right to argue about Ibrâheem.

2- The Jews claimed to be following the Torah and the Christians claimed to be following the Gospel, but the Torah and the Gospel only came down after the time of Ibrâheem. So how

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could they claim that Ibrâheem belonged to them, when he had come before them? Does this make any sense? Hence Allah says: ﴿Do you not understand?﴾ that is, if you did understand what you are saying, you would not say that.

3- Allah (ﷻ) declared that His close friend (Ibrâheem) had nothing to do with the Jews, the Christians or the polytheists; rather He described him as ﴿a monotheist, a Muslim﴾, and stated that the people who were closest to him were those who believed in him of his own nation, and this Prophet – namely Muhammad (ﷺ) – and those who believed with him, because they are the ones who truly followed him, and they are closer to him than any others, and Allah (ﷻ) is their Guardian, Helper and Supporter. As for those who cast his religion behind their backs, such as the Jews and Christians and polytheists, they do not belong to Ibrâheem and he is not one of them; merely attributing themselves falsely to him is of no benefit to them. These verses include the prohibition on arguing and debating without knowledge; the one who speaks in that case is speaking of something that he cannot prove and it is not permissible for him to argue about it. These verses also offer encouragement to learn history, for it is a way to refute many false arguments and claims that are contrary to history.




﴿وَدَّت طَّآئِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ لَوْ يُضِلُّونَكُمْ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّآ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا
يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ يَٰٓأَهْلَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِـَٔايَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ وَأَنتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾
يَٰٓأَهْلَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ لِمَ تَلْبِسُونَ ٱلْحَقَّ بِٱلْبَٰطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُونَ ٱلْحَقَّ وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَقَالَت
طَّآئِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ ءَامِنُوا۟ بِٱلَّذِىٓ أُنزِلَ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَجْهَ ٱلنَّهَارِ وَٱكْفُرُوٓا۟
ءَاخِرَهُۥ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَلَا تُؤْمِنُوٓا۟ إِلَّا لِمَن تَبِعَ دِينَكُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ ٱلْهُدَىٰ هُدَى ٱللَّهِ أَن

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يُؤْتَىٰٓ أَحَدٌ مِّثْلَ مَآ أُوتِيتُمْ أَوْ يُحَآجُّوكُمْ عِندَ رَبِّكُمْ ۗ قُلْ إِنَّ ٱلْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ ٱللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَآءُ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِۦ مَن يَشَآءُ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ ذُو ٱلْفَضْلِ ٱلْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٤﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ٦٩-٧٤)

3:69. Some of the People of the Book wish to lead you astray, but they only lead themselves astray, although they do not realise it.

3:70. O People of the Book, why do you reject the revelations of Allah, while you [yourselves] bear witness [to their truth]?

3:71. O People of the Book, why do you confuse truth with falsehood and knowingly conceal the truth?

3:72. A group among the People of the Book say: [Claim to] believe in the morning in what is revealed to the believers, but reject it at the end of the day; perhaps they may turn back [from Islam].

3:73. And believe no one except one who follows your religion.[24] Say [O Muhammad]: True guidance is the guidance of Allah. [They say:] Lest anyone be given the same as you were given, or argue with you before your Lord. Say: All bounties are in the Hand of Allah; He grants them to whomever He will. And Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.

3:74. He singles out for His mercy whomever He will; for Allah is the Possessor of abundant grace.

Here Allah (ﷻ) warns His believing slaves about the plot of that evil group among the People of the Book, and tells them that they wish to lead you astray, as He says elsewhere:

﴿Many among the People of the Book wish they could turn you back to disbelief after you have believed...﴾ *(al-Baqarah 2: 109)*

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[24] These are the words of that group among the People of the Book to their co-religionists.

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It is well known that the one who wishes for something will try his hardest to attain his goal, and this group is indeed striving and putting effort into leading the believers astray and making them doubt their faith by all possible means. But by His grace and kindness, the plotting of evil only rebounds on those who make the plot. Allah says: ﴿but they only lead themselves astray﴾. Their efforts to lead the believers astray only make them go further astray and will result in more severe punishment for them. Allah says:

﴿For those who disbelieve and bar others from the path of Allah, We will add punishment to their punishment because they used to spread mischief.﴾ *(an-Nahl 16: 88)*

﴿although they do not realise it﴾ that is, they do not realise that they are in fact striving to harm themselves, and that they will not harm you at all.

﴿O People of the Book, why do you reject the revelations of Allah, while you [yourselves] bear witness [to their truth]?﴾ That is, what makes you disbelieve in the revelations of Allah despite your knowing that what you follow is false, and that what Muhammad (ﷺ) has brought is the truth about which you have no doubt; rather you bear witness to it and sometimes whisper this testimony to one another? This is instructing them to give up their misguidance, then Allah rebukes them for misleading the people, as He says:

﴿O People of the Book, why do you confuse truth with falsehood and knowingly conceal the truth?﴾. Here Allah rebukes them for confusing truth with falsehood and for concealing the truth, because by doing these two things they misled their own people. If the scholars confuse truth with falsehood and do not distinguish between them, and instead leave matters vague and conceal the truth which they are enjoined to make manifest, that results in concealment of the truth and the prevalence of falsehood, and hence the common folk who are seeking the truth and want to know it so that they can follow it will not be guided. What is required from the people of knowledge

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is to make the truth clear to the people and proclaim it openly, and distinguish truth from falsehood, and explain clearly the difference between evil and good, what is permissible and what is forbidden, sound belief and corrupt belief, so that the people will be guided, those who have gone astray will be brought back and proof will be established against those who are stubborn. Allah says:

﴿And [remember] when Allah took a covenant from those who were given the scripture, that they should make it known and clear to humankind, and not conceal it; but they cast it behind their backs...﴾ *(Âl 'Imrân 3: 187)*

Then Allah tells us about what this evil group thought of and what they wanted to plot against the believers:
﴿A group among the People of the Book say: [Claim to] believe in the morning in what is revealed to the believers, but reject it at the end of the day﴾ that is, enter their religion with ulterior motives, and as a trick, at the beginning of the day, then at the end of the day, exit from it; ﴿perhaps they may turn back [from Islam]﴾ that is, from their religion, and perhaps they may say: If it were true, the people of knowledge and the Book would not have left it. This is what they were aiming at, because they thought highly of themselves and thought that the people thought well of them and would follow them in what they said and did. But Allah insists that His light should be perfected even if the disbelievers hate that.

They said to one another: ﴿And believe no one except one who follows your religion.﴾ That is, do not trust or accept the word of anyone but your co-religionists, and conceal your affairs, because if you tell others who are not followers of your religion, they will acquire knowledge that you have and will become like you or they will argue with you before your Lord, and will testify against you that proof was established against you and true guidance was explained to you, but you did not follow it. To sum up, they thought that by not telling the believers about what they had of knowledge, they

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would be depriving them of knowledge, because in their view no one could have knowledge except them, and the knowledge they had could establish proof against them. But Allah refuted them by saying: ﴿True guidance is the guidance of Allah﴾, because guidance is only from Allah to everyone who is guided. Guidance means knowing the truth or following it; there is no knowledge except that which was brought by the Messengers of Allah and no one is guided except the one whom Allah guides. The People of the Book were only given a little knowledge, and as for guidance, their share of it has come to an end because of their evil intentions and ulterior motives.

But in the case of this Ummah, Allah granted them knowledge and the ability to act upon it in a way that surpassed all others, and in that regard they superseded all others. So they became the leaders of guidance who guided others as commanded by Allah. This is by the favour and grace of Allah and His great kindness to this Ummah. Hence He said: ﴿Say: All bounties are in the Hand of Allah﴾ that is, Allah is the One Who bestows all kinds of bounties upon His slaves ﴿He grants them to whomever He will﴾ among those who take measures to attain that.

﴿And Allah is All-Encompassing﴾ in His bounty, and very kind ﴿All-Knowing﴾ – He knows who deserves this kindness, so He grants it to him, and He knows who does not deserve it so He withholds it from him.

﴿He singles out for His mercy whomever He will﴾ that is, by His mercy in a general sense, which He grants in this world and makes it continue into the hereafter; this is the blessing of Islam and other blessings.

﴿for Allah is the Possessor of abundant grace﴾ that is indescribable and does not even enter the mind of man; rather His grace and kindness reach as far as His knowledge reaches; our Lord, You have encompassed all things with Your mercy and knowledge.

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﴿ ۞ وَمِنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ مَنْ إِن تَأْمَنْهُ بِقِنطَارٍ يُؤَدِّهِۦٓ إِلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُم مَّنْ إِن تَأْمَنْهُ بِدِينَارٍ لَّا يُؤَدِّهِۦٓ إِلَيْكَ إِلَّا مَا دُمْتَ عَلَيْهِ قَآئِمًا ۗ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا۟ لَيْسَ عَلَيْنَا فِى ٱلْأُمِّيِّـۧنَ سَبِيلٌ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ ٱلْكَذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِۦ وَٱتَّقَىٰ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَهْدِ ٱللَّهِ وَأَيْمَٰنِهِمْ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ لَا خَلَٰقَ لَهُمْ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَلَا يَنظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٧٥-٧٧)

3:75. Among the People of the Book are some who, if entrusted with a heap of gold, will [readily] pay it back; there are others, who, if entrusted with a single gold coin, will not repay it unless you keep standing over him, because, they say: We are under no obligation towards the unlettered. And they tell lies about Allah knowingly.

3:76. But those who fulfil their covenant and fear Allah – Allah loves those who fear Him.

3:77. As for those who sell Allah's covenant and their own oaths for a small price, they shall have no share in the hereafter. Allah will not speak to them or look at them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them, and theirs will be a painful punishment.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about the People of the Book with regard to honesty or dishonesty concerning wealth, as He already mentioned their treachery with regard to religion and their plots and concealment of the truth. He tells us that among them are those who are dishonest and those who are honest, and among them are ﴿some who, if entrusted with a heap of gold﴾ that is, a large amount of wealth ﴿will [readily] pay it back﴾ that is, they are more likely to be honest and return what is less than that. And there are others ﴿who, if entrusted with a single gold coin, will not repay it unless you keep standing

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over him﴾, so it is more likely that they will not return any amount greater than that. What makes them dishonest towards you is that they claim that they are ﴿under no obligation towards the unlettered﴾ that is, there is no sin on them if they do not give their wealth back to them, because on the basis of their false claim and flawed opinions, they look down on them and feel greatly superior to them, when in fact they are the lowest and most despised. They give no sanctity to the unlettered, and they regard that as permissible, and thus they combined the consumption of haram wealth with the belief that it was permissible. This amounted to telling lies about Allah, because when a scholar says that forbidden things are permissible at the time when the people are under the impression that he is speaking of the ruling from Allah and not his own ruling, this is a lie. Hence Allah says: ﴿And they tell lies about Allah knowingly﴾. This is a more serious sin than speaking about Allah without knowledge.

Then He refutes their false claim and says:

﴿But﴾ that is, it is not as you claim, that there is no sin on you for what you do to the unlettered; rather there is the gravest of sin and the greatest blame on you for that.

﴿those who fulfil their covenant and fear Allah﴾. The word covenant here includes everything that Allah has enjoined upon a person with regard to His dues, as well as covenants between one person and another. This is the context in which fear of Allah is required, which leads to fear of falling into sin with regard to matters between a person and his Lord, and between him and other people. The one who does that will be one of the pious who fear Allah, whom Allah (ﷻ) loves, whether they are unlettered or otherwise. Whoever says that we are under no obligation towards the unlettered has not fulfilled his covenant and has not feared Allah, so he is not one of those whom Allah loves; rather he is one of those whom Allah hates. If the unlettered were known to fulfil the covenants, fear Allah and not transgress the limits with regard to the wealth of others, then

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they would be the ones who are beloved to Allah, the pious for whom paradise is prepared, and they would be the best and the most honoured of Allah's creation, unlike those who say, we are under no obligation towards the unlettered. The latter are included in the verse in which Allah says: ﴿As for those who sell Allah's covenant and their own oaths for a small price...﴾. That includes anyone who makes any worldly gains in return for overlooking the rights of Allah or the rights of His slaves. It also includes the one who swears an oath in order to acquire the property of another to which he has no right; such a one is also included in this verse. These are the ones who ﴿shall have no share in the hereafter﴾ that is, they will have no share of good.

﴿Allah will not speak to them﴾ on the Day of Resurrection, because He will be angry with them, as they gave precedence to their own whims and desires over pleasing their Lord

﴿nor will He purify them﴾ that is, He will not purify them of their sins nor free them from their faults

﴿and theirs will be a painful punishment﴾ that is, it will be painful both psychologically and physically; this is the punishment of the divine wrath and being kept away from Him, and the punishment of hell. We ask Allah to keep us safe and sound.

 

﴿وَإِنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفَرِيقًا يَلْوُۥنَ أَلْسِنَتَهُم بِٱلْكِتَٰبِ لِتَحْسَبُوهُ مِنَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ مِنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ ٱلْكَذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٧٨)

3:78. There are some among them who distort the Book with their tongues, so that you would think it is part of the Book, but it is not part of the Book; and they say: This is from Allah, but it is not from Allah. And they tell lies about Allah knowingly.

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Here Allah tells us that some of the People of the Book distort the Book with their tongues, that is, they twist the meanings. That includes distorting both the pronunciation and the meanings, when what should be done is to keep the wording of the Book as it is and not change it, and to understand it properly and help others to do likewise. But these people did the opposite of that and they gave an impression of incorrect meanings of the Book, either implicitly or explicitly. They do so implicitly in such a manner that ﴿you would think it is part of the Book﴾ that is, they distort it with their tongues and give you the impression that this is what is intended in the Book of Allah, when it is not what was intended. And they do so explicitly when they say ﴿This is from Allah, but it is not from Allah. And they tell lies about Allah knowingly﴾. This is a more serious sin than speaking about Allah without knowledge. These people tell lies about Allah, and thus they combine denial of the true meaning and affirmation of the false meaning, in order to knowingly interpret in a corrupt manner the verses that speak of the truth.




﴿ مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَن يُؤْتِيَهُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْحُكْمَ وَٱلنُّبُوَّةَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ كُونُوا۟ عِبَادًا لِّى مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ وَلَٰكِن كُونُوا۟ رَبَّٰنِيِّـۧنَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَبِمَا كُنتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَلَا يَأْمُرَكُمْ أَن تَتَّخِذُوا۟ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةَ وَٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ أَرْبَابًا ۚ أَيَأْمُرُكُم بِٱلْكُفْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٧٩-٨٠)

3:79. No human being to whom Allah has given the scripture, wisdom and prophethood would ever say to the people: Be my worshippers rather than Allah's. On the contrary [he would say]: Be perfect in knowledge and in deeds, by virtue of your constant teaching of the scripture and of your constant study thereof.

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3:80. Nor would he instruct you to take angels and Prophets for lords. Would he command you to disbelieve after you have submitted to Allah [as Muslims]?

This verse was revealed in response to those of the People of the Book who said to the Prophet (ﷺ), when he instructed them to believe in him and called them to obey him: O Muhammad, do you want us to worship you alongside Allah? He said: ﴿No human being﴾ that is, it is utterly impossible for any human being whom Allah has blessed by sending down the Book to him, and teaching him what he did not know and sending him to humankind, to ﴿ever say to the people: Be my worshippers rather than Allah's﴾. This is the most impossible thing for any of the Prophets ever to do, because this is the most abhorrent of all things and the Prophets are the most perfect of all people. Hence their instructions are befitting to their status, so they would never enjoin anything but the most sublime of actions, and they would be the most outspoken of people in forbidding abhorrent things. Hence Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿On the contrary [he would say]: Be perfect in knowledge and in deeds, by virtue of your constant teaching of the scripture and of your constant study thereof﴾ that is, rather he would enjoin them to be perfect in knowledge, that is, wise and forbearing scholars who teach the people and educate them in a gradual manner and act upon what they know and teach. Thus they enjoin the pursuit of knowledge, acting upon it and teaching it, which is the basis of success; falling short in any of these matters leads to shortcomings and problems.

﴿by virtue of your constant teaching﴾ that is, because of what you teach others of that which you know and have studied of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ), by studying which you have attained deep and entrenched knowledge, as you have become perfect in knowledge and in deeds.

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﴿Nor would he instruct you to take angels and Prophets for lords﴾. This is a general statement after a specific statement. In other words, he would not instruct you to worship him or to worship any of creation, such as the angels, Prophets or others.

﴿Would he command you to disbelieve after you have submitted to Allah [as Muslims]?﴾ This is something that could not happen and it cannot be imagined that such a thing would be done by one whom Allah has blessed with prophethood. Whoever accuses any of the Prophets of any such thing has committed a grievous sin and an abhorrent act of disbelief.




﴿وَإِذْ أَخَذَ ٱللَّهُ مِيثَٰقَ ٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ لَمَآ ءَاتَيْتُكُم مِّن كِتَٰبٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَآءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِۦ وَلَتَنصُرُنَّهُۥ ۚ قَالَ ءَأَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَخَذْتُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُمْ إِصْرِى ۖ قَالُوٓا۟ أَقْرَرْنَا ۚ قَالَ فَٱشْهَدُوا۟ وَأَنَا۠ مَعَكُم مِّنَ ٱلشَّٰهِدِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ فَمَن تَوَلَّىٰ بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْفَٰسِقُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٨١-٨٢)

3:81. And [remember] when Allah took the covenant of the Prophets, saying: If I give you scripture and wisdom, and there comes to you a Messenger confirming what is with you, then you must believe in him and you must support him. [Allah] said: Do you agree, and take this covenant of Mine as binding upon you? They said: We agree. He said: Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses.

3:82. If any turn away after this, it is they who are the evildoers.

Here Allah tells us that He took from the Prophets a covenant and a solemn pledge because of what He bestowed upon them of the revealed Book of Allah and the wisdom to distinguish between truth and falsehood, guidance and misguidance. The covenant was that if

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Allah sent a Messenger confirming what was with them, they would believe in him and follow him, and they took this pledge from their nations. So Allah (ﷻ) enjoined them to believe in one another and confirm one another, because everything they had was from Allah, and everything that is from Allah must be believed and followed. Thus they were all the same, and on this basis it is known that Muhammad (ﷺ) is the last of them; all the Prophets, if they had lived to see him, were obliged to believe in him, follow him and support him, and he would be their leader and commander. This verse is one of the greatest proofs of his high status and that he is the best of the Prophets and their leader. When Allah (ﷻ) asked them if they agreed, ﴿They said: We agree﴾ that is, we accept what You have commanded, willingly. Allah (ﷻ) said to them: ﴿Then bear witness﴾ to yourselves and your nations to that effect; ﴿and I am with you among the witnesses﴾.

﴿If any turn away after this﴾ that is, after this covenant and pledge that has been confirmed by testimony from Allah and from His Messengers
﴿it is they who are the evildoers﴾. Based on this, those who claim to be followers of the Prophets, like the Jews and Christians and those who followed them, have turned away from this solemn covenant and deserve to be among the evildoers who will abide forever in hell, if they do not believe in Muhammad (ﷺ).

﴿أَفَغَيْرَ دِينِ ٱللَّهِ يَبْغُونَ وَلَهُۥٓ أَسْلَمَ مَن فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَكَرْهًا وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٨٣)

3:83. Is it other than the religion of Allah that they seek, when to Him has submitted everything in the heavens and on earth, willingly or unwillingly, and to Him they will return?

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That is, are the seekers seeking a religion other than the religion of Allah? That is not appropriate and it is not befitting, because there is no better religion than the religion of Allah
﴿when to Him has submitted everything in the heavens and on earth, willingly or unwillingly﴾ that is, all of creation are subjugated to Him and in a state of submission to Him, willingly and by choice, namely the Muslim believers who are submitting to the worship of their Lord, or unwillingly, namely the rest of creation, even the disbelievers who must submit to His will and decree, and they have no way of evading it or resisting it, and to Him all creatures will return, and He will judge between them and requite them on the basis of either grace or justice.

 

﴿قُلْ ءَامَنَّا بِٱللَّهِ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَمَآ أُنزِلَ عَلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَإِسْمَٰعِيلَ وَإِسْحَٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَٱلْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَآ أُوتِىَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَٱلنَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُۥ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٨٤)

3:84. Say: We believe in Allah, and that which has been sent down to us, and that which was sent down to Ibrâheem, Ismâ'eel, Is-ḥâq, Ya'qoob, and the tribes, and that which was given to Moosâ and 'Eesâ, and to the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between one and another of them, and to Him we have submitted [in Islam].

There is a similar verse in Soorat al-Baqarah *(2: 136)*.

 

﴿وَمَن يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ ٱلْإِسْلَٰمِ دِينًا فَلَن يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ مِنَ ٱلْخَٰسِرِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ٨٥)

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3:85. If anyone seeks a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted from him; and in the hereafter he will be among the losers.

That is, whoever follows a religion other than the religion of Islam, which Allah wants His slaves to follow, his deeds will be rejected and not accepted, because the religion of Islam is what is meant by (willing) submission to the will of Allah and sincerely following His Messengers. So if a person does not adhere to it, then he is not taking the measures of salvation from the punishment of Allah and attaining His reward. All religions other than Islam are false.




﴿كَيْفَ يَهْدِي ٱللَّهُ قَوْمًا كَفَرُوا۟ بَعْدَ إِيمَٰنِهِمْ وَشَهِدُوٓا۟ أَنَّ ٱلرَّسُولَ حَقٌّ وَجَآءَهُمُ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتُ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ جَزَآؤُهُمْ أَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةَ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ وَٱلنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا ۖ لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ ٱلْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ تَابُوا۟ مِنۢ بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا۟ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٨٩﴾﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ٨٦-٨٩)

3:86. How would Allah guide people who disbelieve after having believed and borne witness that the Messenger was true and that clear signs had come unto them? But Allah does not guide people who are wrongdoers.

3:87. The requital of such people is that upon them is the curse of Allah, the angels and all humankind.

3:88. They will remain under it forever. Their punishment will not be alleviated, nor will they be given respite.

3:89. Except for those who repent after that, and mend their ways; for verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

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This is an expression of something being very unlikely; that is, it is very unlikely that Allah would guide people who chose disbelief and misguidance after having believed and testified that the Messenger (ﷺ) was true on the basis of what he brought to them of clear signs and definitive proof.

﴿But Allah does not guide people who are wrongdoers﴾. These people did wrong and abandoned the truth after having come to know it, and they followed falsehood even though they knew it was false, wrongfully and stubbornly, and on the basis of their own whims and desires. Hence these people will not be shown the path of guidance, because the one who it is hoped will be guided is the one who did not know the truth but is keen to seek it. Such a one is deserving of being shown the path of guidance and being protected from misguidance by Allah.

Then Allah tells us of the punishment of these stubborn wrongdoers in this world and in the hereafter, as He says:

﴿The requital of such people is that upon them is the curse of Allah, the angels and all humankind. They will remain under it forever. Their punishment will not be alleviated, nor will they be given respite﴾. That is, the punishment is not reduced for them, not even for a moment, either by being stopped altogether or by being reduced in intensity. ﴿nor will they be given respite﴾ that is, they will not be given any reprieve, because the time for respite has passed and Allah has left them no excuse, as He caused them to live for a long time but they did not heed the admonition. If there had been any good in them, it would have shown, and if they were to return to this world they would go back to their evil ways.

﴿ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ بَعْدَ إِيمَٰنِهِمْ ثُمَّ ٱزْدَادُوا۟ كُفْرًا لَّن تُقْبَلَ تَوْبَتُهُمْ ۖ وَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلضَّآلُّونَ ﴿٩٠﴾ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ وَمَاتُوا۟ وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ فَلَن يُقْبَلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِم مِّلْءُ

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ٱلْأَرْضِ ذَهَبًا وَلَوِ ٱفْتَدَىٰ بِهِۦٓ ۗ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ وَمَا لَهُم مِّن نَّٰصِرِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ٩٠-٩١)

3:90. But those who disbelieve after having believed – and then continue increasing in their disbelief, their repentance will never be accepted; they are the ones who have gone astray.

3:91. Verily those who disbelieved and died as disbelievers, not an earthful of gold will be accepted from any such, even if they were to offer it as a ransom. For such there will be a painful punishment, and they will find no helpers.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that whoever disbelieves after having believed, then increases in disbelief by persisting in wrongdoing and misguidance, and persisting in turning away from the path of guidance, his repentance will not be accepted. In other words, they will not be helped to repent in any acceptable manner; rather Allah will let them get carried away in their misguidance. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿We will turn their hearts and eyes away [from the truth], since they refused to believe in it the first time...﴾ *(al-An'ām 6: 110)*

﴿...So when they chose to deviate [from the truth], Allah caused their hearts to deviate...﴾ *(aṣ-Ṣaff 61: 5)*

Hence evil deeds lead to more evil deeds, especially in the case of one who has fallen into major disbelief and has abandoned the straight path, after proof was established against him and Allah had shown him clear signs and evidence. Such a person has barred himself from taking measures of attaining his Lord's mercy, and he is the one who has barred the way to repentance for himself. Hence misguidance is solely applicable to this type of people.

﴿they are the ones who have gone astray﴾ that is, what misguidance can be greater than that of the one who has abandoned the straight path, knowing that it is the straight path. If these disbelievers persist

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in disbelief until death, then eternal doom and wretchedness become inevitable, and nothing will benefit them; if one of them were to spend an earthful of gold to ransom himself from the punishment of Allah, that would not benefit him at all; rather they will inevitably remain subjected to the painful punishment, with no intercessor, support or help, and no one to turn to, to save them from the punishment of Allah. Thus they will despair of all good and will be certain that they will abide forever subject to punishment and wrath; may Allah save us from their fate.



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Glossary of Islamic Terms*

abu (or *abi*)	أبو، أبي	father (of)
ahl as-Sunnah wal-jamâ'ah	أهل السُّنَّة والجماعة	'people of the Sunnah and the community'
Allâhu akbar	الله أكبر	Allah is the Greatest
angel	ملاك	A being made of light who is totally obedient to Allah and has no free will. Allah has assigned some angels specific tasks, like those who record our good and bad deeds, the Angel of Death, the guardians of hell, etc.
Anṣâr	أنْصار	'helpers': the Muslim citizens of Madinah who gave refuge to the Prophet (ﷺ) and the other Muslim emigrants from Makkah
'aqeedah (pl. *'aqâ'id*)	عَقِيدة	belief system that is based upon a firm conviction in all the fundamentals of faith and of the oneness of Allah; firm creed that one's heart is fixed upon without any wavering or doubt, and

* The Arabic words are transliterated according to the conventions of the Transliteration Chart found in this book. If a word has become part of the English language (that is, is found in a dictionary of Standard English), that spelling is used in this book and appears first in this glossary, with the transliterated form in brackets after it.

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		that excludes any supposition, doubt or suspicion
'Arafah (pl. *'Arafât*)	عَرَفة، عَرَفات	the plain outside of Makkah where pilgrims gather at the climax of the Hajj; it is actually made up of a chain of hills, so the plural form is sometimes used
'aṣr	عَصْر	mid-afternoon; the obligatory prayer at that time
âyah (pl. *âyât*)	آية	verse of the Qur'an; sign of Allah
banu (or *bani*)	بَنُو ، بني	*lit.* 'children (of)'; *usu.* referring to a tribe that claims a common ancestor
barzakh	بَرْزَخ	An intermediate state between death and the Day of Resurrection; it is also said to be a 'place' where the souls of the deceased will remain until the blowing of the trumpet
Bayt al-Maqdis	بَيْت المَقْدِس	the Islamic term for Jerusalem
bid'ah	بِدْعة	innovation, *esp.* undesired innovation in matters of religion
bismillâh	بِسْمِ الله	in the name of Allah
dhikr Allâh	ذِكْر الله	remembrance of Allah; specifically, remembering Allah through praising and supplicating to Him
du'â'	دُعاء	supplication; invocation
eemân	إيمان	faith; belief in all the six pillars of the creed of Islam

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Eid *('eed)*	عيد	*lit.* 'festival': one of the two annual Islamic celebrations, one at the end of Ramadan and the other at the culmination of the Hajj
fajr	الْفَجْر	dawn; the obligatory prayer at that time
fatwa *(fatwah)*	فَتْوَى	religious decision or decree
fiqh	فِقْه	Islamic jurisprudence; understanding or interpreting Islamic law
ghusl	غُسل	ritual shower necessary after a major impurity, e.g., after sexual intercourse or at the end of the menstrual period
ḥadd	حَدّ	specific punishments prescribed in Sharia for specific offences such as theft and fornication
hadith *(ḥadeeth)*	حديث	a statement or action of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that was remembered and recorded by his Companions and followers
hadith qudsi	حديث قُدُسِيّ	'sacred hadith'; a hadith communicated to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) by Allah, but that is not part of the Qur'an
Hajj (Ḥajj)	حجّ	the major pilgrimage to the Sacred Mosque, site of the Kaaba in Makkah, to be undertaken by every able Muslim once in his or her lifetime
halal *(ḥalâl)*	حلال	permitted according to Islamic law
Ḥaram	حَرَم	the sacred area surrounding and including the Kaaba in Makkah; any inviolable or holy area

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haram *(ḥarâm)*	حرام	forbidden according to Islamic law
hijab *(ḥijâb)*	حِجاب	veil ordained by Allah for believing women
Hijrah	هِجْرة	migration, *esp.* the migration from Makkah to Madinah by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions, which marks the start of the Islamic calendar
'ibâdât (sg. *'ibâdah*)	عِبادات	acts of worship
Iblees	إبْليس	another name for Satan (Shayṭân) in Arabic
'iddah	عِدَّة	the waiting period after a woman is widowed or divorced, during which she is not allowed to remarry, in order to ascertain whether or not she is pregnant with the child of her late or ex-husband
ifrâd	إفْراد	one of the three types of Hajj; in this case, the pilgrim performs Hajj alone (not combined with *'umrah*)
iḥrâm	إحْرام	the state of consecration for Hajj or 'umrah; the special clothing worn by the pilgrim in such a state
in shâ' Allâh	إنْ شاء الله	God willing
isrâ' and *mi'râj*	الإسْراء والمِعْراج	the night journey of the Prophet (ﷺ) from Makkah to Jerusalem and his ascension from there to visit heaven

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i'tikâf	اعْتِكاف	a spiritual retreat; seclusion in the mosque solely for the purpose of worship
jâhiliyah	جاهِلِيَّة	*lit.* 'ignorance'; the age of spiritual darkness before Islam
jamrah (pl. *jamarât*)	جَمْرَة	*lit.* 'stones'; one of the stone structures at which pilgrims throw pebbles during the Hajj, emulating Prophet Ibrâheem (ﷺ) when he threw stones at the devil
janâbah	جَنابَة	a state of ritual impurity due to sexual activity or emission
Jibreel	جِبْرِيل	the Arabic name for Gabriel (ﷺ), the archangel who transmitted the verses of the Qur'an and other communications from Allah (ﷻ) to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)
jihad *(jihâd)*	جِهاد	struggle or striving (in Allah's cause)
jinn (plural of *jinni*)	جِنّ	non-human, rational beings created by Allah from fire, often referred to as 'demons' or 'devils'. They have free will like humans: some are Muslims, others disbelievers; some are obedient to Allah, others disobedient. Satan is a jinni. Some disobedient jinn mislead people into thinking that they can foretell the future, near or distant, or provide people with riches or some sort of power.
jizyah	جِزْيَة	a tax levied on the People of the Scriptures when they are under the

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		protection of a Muslim government; it is in lieu of the alms tax paid by Muslims
juz' (pl. *ajzâ'*)	جُزْء	a section of the Qur'an equal to one-thirtieth of the text
Kaaba (*Ka'bah*)	الكَعْبة	the House of Allah in Makkah, originally built by Prophets Ibrâheem and Ismâ'eel, which Muslims face when they pray
khuṭbah	خُطْبة	sermon or speech; specifically, the sermon given during the Friday congregational prayer
Laylat al-Qadr	لَيْلة الْقَدْر	the 'Night of Destiny' or 'Night of Power' on which the Qur'an was first revealed; the most blessed night of the year, which is better than a thousand months; Muslims look for it on the odd nights during the last ten days of Ramadan and are supposed to spend those nights in prayer and supplication, reciting Qur'an and seeking Allah's forgiveness
maḥram	مَحْرَم	a degree of consanguinity precluding marriage; a man whom a woman may not marry due to the close blood or marriage relationship, e.g., her father, brother, son, uncle, or father-in-law
makrooh	مَكْروه	disliked
manna	مَنّ	a sweet, nutritious food that Allah (ﷻ) sent to the children of Israel when they were wandering in the desert

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Marwah	الْمَرْوَة	one of the two hills between which pilgrims must hurry back and forth during the rites of the Hajj and the *'umrah*
al-Masjid al-Ḥarâm	المسجد الحرام	the Sacred Mosque in Makkah, where the Kaaba is situated
muṣ-ḥaf	مُصْحَف	a copy of the Arabic text of the Qur'an that is neither accompanied by commentary nor translated
mustaḥabb	مُسْتَحَب	*lit.* 'encouraged'; righteous deeds that are not obligatory but encouraged in the religious texts; the one who does them will be rewarded, but the one who does not do them does not incur sin and will not be punished.
nafl (pl. *nawâfil*)	نَفْل	supererogatory or optional acts of worship, such as prayer and fasting
qadr	الْقَدر	divine predestination; destiny; power; exact measure
qibla *(qiblah)*	القِبْلة	the bearing from any point on Earth to the Kaaba; the direction that all Muslims must face in prayer
qirân	قِرَان	one of the three types of Hajj; in this type, the pilgrim performs Hajj combined with *'umrah*
Quraysh	قُرَيْش	the dominant tribe in Makkah at the time of the Prophet's mission; their society was based on polytheism
rak'ah (pl. *raka'ât*)	رَكْعَة	a unit of the formal prayer (*ṣalâh*)

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Ramadan (*Ramaḍân*)	رمضان	the ninth month in the Islamic calendar; the month of obligatory fasting and the month in which the first verses of the Qur'an were revealed
ribâ	رِبا	usury; charging interest on debt
Ṣafâ	الصَّفا	one of the two hills between which pilgrims must hurry back and forth during the rites of the Hajj and the *'umrah*
Ṣaḥâbah	صَحابة	Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)
ṣaḥeeḥ	صحيح	a grade of hadith: sound or authentic
sa'iy	سَعْي	one of the rites of Hajj; the pilgrim walks seven times between the hills of Ṣafâ and Marwah, re-enacting Hajar's search for water for her baby Ismâ'eel
salâm	السلام	*lit.* 'peace'; the Islamic greeting of peace
shar'i	شَرْعي	of or pertaining to Sharia; Islamic
Sharia *(sharee'ah)*	شَرِيعة	Islamic law derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah; the teachings of Islam as a whole
soorah or *soorat*	سُورة	chapter of the Qur'an
suḥoor	سُحور	the pre-dawn meal eaten before the start of a fasting day
Sunnah	سُنَّة	the practice and collected sayings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that together with the Qur'an forms the basis of Islamic law

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sunnah	سُنَّة	acts that are recommended but not mandatory; one who performs them is rewarded, but one who neglects tem is not punished
tâbi'een (sg. *tâbi'i)*	التَّابِعون	'successors'; those who knew or met any of the Companions and transmitted hadiths from them
tafseer	تَفْسير	exegesis: commentary, or explanation of the meanings (*usu.* of Qur'anic verses)
tahajjud	تَهَجُّد	voluntary night prayer offered between *'ishâ'* and *fajr*
takbeer	تَكْبير	the act of saying *Allâhu akbar* (Allah is the Greatest)
tamattu'	تَمَتُّع	one of the three types of Hajj; in this type, the pilgrim performs *'umrah* during the Hajj season, then performs Hajj separately
taqwâ	التَّقْوَى	fearful awareness of Allah; being mindful of Allah; pious dedication; being careful not to transgress the bounds set by Allah
tashreeq	التَّشْريق	the three holy days following the 10th of Dhul-Ḥijjah; they comprise Eid al-Aḍḥâ
ṭawâf	طَوَاف	circumambulation of the Kaaba
tawḥeed	التَّوْحيد	the Oneness of Allah: the knowledge that He alone deserves to be worshipped and that He has no partners

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'uboodiyah	عُبودِيَّة	servitude, slavery
uḍḥiyah	أُضْحية	an animal sacrificed as an act of worship during the days of Eid al-Aḍḥâ
Ummah	أُمَّة	community or nation: *usu.* used to refer to the entire global community of Muslims
'umrah	عُمْرة	a minor, non-obligatory pilgrimage to Makkah
unseen	خفي	a term used to denote phenomena or aspects that cannot be known using ordinary human faculties
waqf	وَقْف	trust; inalienable endowment for a charitable purpose
zakâh (or *zakât)*	زكاة	obligatory charity: an 'alms tax' on wealth that is paid by Muslims and be distributed to others who qualify as recipients



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