

﴿ سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّيْتُمْ مَا وَوَلَّيْتُمْ عَنِ قِبَلِهِمُ الَّذِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا قُلْ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ  
وَالْمَغْرِبُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٤٢﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا  
لِنَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ  
الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ  
لَكِبْرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ  
لَرُءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿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

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-Ahzāb* 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:

«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

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

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

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

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-jam'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 زَيَّ نَفْلُكَ وَجْهَكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ  
شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا  
الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾ (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

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



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.



﴿وَلَيْنَ آتَيْتَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَا تَتَّبِعُوا قِبْلَتَكَ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتِهِمْ وَمَا بَعْضُهُمْ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ ۗ وَلَيْنَ آتَبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّكَ إِذًا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾ (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

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

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.



﴿الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ، كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ  
الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٤٦-١٤٧)

(١٤٧-١٤٦)

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

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.



﴿وَلِكُلِّ وِجْهَةٍ هُوَ مَوَلِيهَا فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْحَيْرَاتِ ۚ إِنَّ مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِي بِكُمْ 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

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 مِنْ رَبِّكَ ۗ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۗ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ ۗ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي ۗ وَلِأَتِمَّ بِنِعْمَتِي 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

﴿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

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,



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

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.



﴿ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِنْكُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ  
وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٥١-١٥٢) ﴿ فَاذْكُرُونِي  
أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونَ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: 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.

﴿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)

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...» (Ibrāheem 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

is disbelief in Allah, then sins of different types, such as associating others with Allah and sins that are less serious than that.



﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ﴾ (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

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-Hadeed 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.



﴿وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمُوتَ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ﴾

(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.﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 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

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.



﴿وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِيرِ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾﴾ (سورة



- 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.

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

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).



﴿ إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِن شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتَ أَوْ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَن يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا وَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٥٨)

2:158. Verily Şafā 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 Şafā 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 Şafā 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-Hajj 22: 32)

–the two texts together indicate that they (Şafā 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

had about going back and forth between them, because during the jāhiliyah 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

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 الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْهُدَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّاهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّعِينُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَبَيَّنَّوْنَا فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَثُوبٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنَا التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦٠﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارًا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿١٦٢﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٥٩-١٦٢)

- 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 Acceptor 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

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 Acceptor 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.



«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.



﴿وَالنَّهْكَرُ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾ (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

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 السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَّاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيْحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ 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

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

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

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.

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

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 النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّوهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ رَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ ﴿١٦٥﴾ إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا وَرَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ وَتَقَطَّعَتْ بِهِمُ الْأَسْبَابُ ﴿١٦٦﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا لَوْ أَنَّا كُنَّا نَدْرِكُهُمْ لَسَخَّطْنَا لَهُمْ عَنَّا كِسْفَ الْبَارِئِ لَوْلَا أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا أَتَقْوَى اللَّهِ وَآذَنُوا لَهُ لَكُنَّا عَنْهُمْ مُبْطِلِينَ ﴿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,

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



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

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

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...﴾

(Ibrāheem 14: 22)



﴿يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ كُلُّوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٦٨﴾ إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُم بِالسُّوءِ وَالْفَحْشَاءِ وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا نَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا أَلْفَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أَوَّلُوا كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْئًا 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 Shayṭān, 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

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 Shayṭān» 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 *sā'ibah* and *ḥām*<sup>13</sup> 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 Shayṭān 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

<sup>13</sup> The *sā'ibah* and *ḥām* were types of camels that were set loose to pasture freely in honour of idols during the *jāhiliyah*, and it was forbidden to make use of them.

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 Shayṭān, who promotes it. These are the ways of the Shayṭān, 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

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 Shayṭān, 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.



﴿وَمَثَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي يَنْعِقُ بِمَا لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دُعَاءَ وَنِدَاءَ صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمْى 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.

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.



﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿١٧٢﴾ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالْدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ بِهِ لغيرِ اللَّهِ ۗ فَمَن اضْطَرَّ غَيْرَ بَاعٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِنَّم عَلَيْهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٧٣﴾ ﴾

(سورة البقرة: ١٧٢-١٧٣)

- 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.



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﴾.

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 الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَشْتُرُونَ بِهِ مِمَّا قَلِيلًا  
 أَوْلِيَّتِكَ مَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ إِلَّا النَّارَ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا  
 يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٤﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالَةَ بِالْهُدَى  
 وَالْعَذَابَ بِالْمَغْفِرَةِ فَمَا أَصْبَرَهُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ ﴿١٧٥﴾ ذَلِكَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ نَزَلَ الْكِتَابِ  
 بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ آخَلَفُوا فِي الْكِتَابِ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ 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.

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,<sup>14</sup> 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?

<sup>14</sup> The word translated here as «purify» may also mean “praise”.

«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

anyone who went against it would stray from the truth and go much too far in opposition. And Allah knows best.



﴿ لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالسَّلَاطَةِ وَالْيَتِيمِ وَالنَّكِيثِ وَعَاتَى أَلْمَالِ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَأَبْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَعَاتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُؤْتُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴾ (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)

– 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...» (Ál 'Imrân 3: 92)

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.

«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



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.

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.



﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلِ الْحُرُّ بِالْحُرِّ وَالْعَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ وَالْأُنثَىٰ  
بِالْأُنثَىٰ ۖ فَمَنْ عَفَىٰ لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ فَإِنْبَاعٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَدَاءٌ إِلَيْهِ بِإِحْسَانٍ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ  
تَخْفِيفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۗ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٨﴾ وَلَكُمْ فِي  
الْقِصَاصِ حَيَوةٌ يَا أُولِيَ الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ 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

to prevent the victim's next of kin from exacting legal retribution, as was customary during the jāhiliyah 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 (diyyah) 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

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.

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.



﴿ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا الْوَصِيَّةَ لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ  
وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُنْفِقِينَ ﴿١٨٠﴾ فَمَنْ بَدَّلَهُ بَعْدَ مَا سَمِعَهُ فَإِنَّمَا إِثْمُهُ عَلَى  
الَّذِينَ يُبَدِّلُونَهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٨١﴾ فَمَنْ خَافَ مِنْ مُوسٍ جَنَفًا أَوْ إِثْمًا فَأَصْلَحَ بَيْنَهُمْ  
فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿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.

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

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.



﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾ أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مَسْكِينٍ فَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ. وَأَن تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٤﴾ شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْءَانُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَى وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا هَدَىٰكُم وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿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.

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 Shayṭān, who flows through the son of Adam like blood. Fasting weakens the Shayṭān'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.

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,

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 *Allāhu akbar* – Allah is most great) at the end of the fast. That also includes magnifying Allah from the

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﴾ (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

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 الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَى نِسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِيَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِيَاسٌ لَهُنَّ ۗ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ ۖ فَالْتَمَنَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنْ يُخْرِجَهُمْ مِنَ الْبَلَدِ الْمَقْرُونِ فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا يَأْتِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ۗ وَأَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ كَافِرُونَ ۗ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرَبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لِّلنَّاسِ 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

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.

It also indicates that it is recommended to have the pre-dawn meal (*suhoor*), 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



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 تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبُطْلِ وَتُدْخُلُوا بِهَا إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (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

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

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-Nisā' 4: 105)



﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهْلَةِ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مِنَ اتَّقَى وَأَتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾ (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

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 Anṣār and others among the Arabs entered *iḥrām*, 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.



﴿ وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقْتُلُونَكُمۥ وَلَا تَعَدُّوٓا۟ إِلَآئَ اللَّهِ لَا يُحِبُّ  
 الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿١٩٠﴾ وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ يُفۡتِنُونُكُمْ وَأَخۡرِجُوهُمْ مِّنۥ حَيْثُ أَخۡرَجُوكُمۥ ۗ وَالۡفِتۡنَةُ أَشَدُّ  
 مِنَ الْقَتْلِ ۗ وَلَا تَقۡتُلُوهُمْ عِنۡدَ الْمَسۡجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّىٰ يُقۡتِلُوكُمۥ فِيهِ ۖ إِنۡ قَتَلُوكُمۥ فَاقۡتُلُوهُمْ كَذَٰلِكَ  
 جَزَآءُ الْكٰفِرِينَ ﴿١٩١﴾ إِنۡ أَنۡهَوۡا۟ فَإِنۡ لِلَّهِ عَفۡوٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٩٢﴾ وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتۡنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ  
 لِلدِّينِ لِلَّهِ فَإِنۡ أَنۡهَوۡا۟ فَلَا عُدۡوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿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

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.

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 وَالْحُرُمَتُ قِصَاصٌ فَمَنْ أَعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَعِدُوا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا أَعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ﴾ (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

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 *ihrām* 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.



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.



﴿وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾

(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

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:

«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:



﴿وَاتِمُوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ وَلَا تَحْلِقُوا رُءُوسَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ الْهَدْيُ مَحَلَّهُ ۚ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ بِهِ أَذًى مِنْ رَأْسِهِ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِنْ صِيَامٍ أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ ۚ فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَمَنْ تَمَنَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ ۚ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامٌ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ فِي الْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ ۚ تِلْكَ عَشْرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ ۚ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلَهُ حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١٦٦﴾﴾ (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 ihram], 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

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 *ihrām* for them does not exit *ihrām* 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 *ihrām* because of having been prevented from continuing. This is what was

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'*,<sup>15</sup> then exit *iḥrām*.

﴿and do not shave your heads until the offering reaches the place of sacrifice﴾. This is one of the things that are forbidden during *iḥrām*: 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 *iḥrām* 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 *iḥrām* for Hajj, and he cannot exit *iḥrām* 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.

<sup>15</sup> *Tamattu'* (Hajj): Hajj plus 'umrah, the pilgrim enters *iḥrām* for 'umrah, performs 'umrah, exits *iḥrām*, then enters *iḥrām* again for Hajj.

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 *iḥrām*).

﴿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 *iḥrām* 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 *iḥrām* after completing ‘umrah and before starting Hajj. The same applies to the one who is doing Hajj *qirān*,<sup>16</sup> because he is doing two rituals in one journey.

The verse implies that the one who is doing Hajj *ifrād*<sup>17</sup> 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 *iḥrām* for ‘umrah, and the end of the period is the three days after the Day of Sacrifice, the days of stoning the *jamarāt* and staying overnight in Mina. But it is preferable to fast on the seventh, eighth and ninth days of Dhul-Ḥijjah.

<sup>16</sup> *Qirān* (Hajj): Hajj plus ‘umrah with no break in between; the pilgrim enters *iḥrām* for both ‘umrah and Hajj, and does not exit *iḥrām* after performing ‘umrah, until he has completed Hajj.

<sup>17</sup> *Ifrād* (Hajj): performing Hajj only, without ‘umrah.

«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.



«الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَةٌ فَمَنْ فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي الْحَجِّ وَمَا تَفَعَّلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَلْمَهُ اللَّهُ وَكَزَّوْذُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُونِ يَا أُولِيَ الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٧﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٩٧)

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-Hijjah. These are the months in which people usually enter iĥrâm for Hajj.

«Whoever undertakes to perform Hajj during them» that is, whoever enters iĥrâm 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 iĥrâm 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 iĥrâm 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 iĥrâm for



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 iḥrām. 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

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 أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۚ فَإِذَا أَقْبَضْتُمْ مِنْ عَرَفَاتٍ فَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِنْدَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ ۗ وَأَذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَيْتُمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمَنِ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿١٩٨﴾ ثُمَّ أَفِيضُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاضَ النَّاسُ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلَّهِ إِنَّهُ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٩٩﴾ فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمْ مَنَاسِكَكُمْ فَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَذِكْرِكُمْ آبَاءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا فَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آئِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلْقٍ ﴿٢٠٠﴾ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آئِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقَنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿٢٠١﴾ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا 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.

- 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 'Arafât, remember Allah at the sacred place [Muzdalifah]». This indicates a number of things:

**Firstly:** The standing in 'Arafât, which was known to be an essential part of the Hajj. Moving on from 'Arafât can only come after standing in 'Arafât.

**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 'Arafât, as is indicated by the word order in this verse.

**Fourth and fifth:** ‘Arafāt 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:** ‘Arafāt is outside the Ḥaram zone, as may be understood from the fact that Muzdalifah is described as sacred, but not ‘Arafāt.

﴿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 Ibrāheem (ﷺ) until the present. What is meant by this moving on was well known to them; it meant moving on and stoning the jamarāt, offering the sacrifice, ṭawāf (circumambulation of the Kaaba), sa‘iy (going between Ṣafā 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

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.



﴿ وَأذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْدُودَاتٍ ۚ فَمَن تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ وَمَن تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ لِمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ وَآتَقَىٰ اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴾

(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-Aḍḥā*), 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-Hijjah), 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

«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 النَّاسِ مَن يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ ۖ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ ﴿٢٠٤﴾ وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفُسَادَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ ۖ فَحَسْبُهُ جَهَنَّمُ ۖ وَلَيْسَ إِلِمَهُادُ ﴿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.

- 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.



«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 النَّاسِ مَن يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ  
بِالْعَبَادِ﴾ (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

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.



﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَذْخُلُوا فِي السِّلَاحِ كَافَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢٠٨﴾ فَإِنْ زَلَلْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْكُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٩﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٠٨-٢٠٩)

2:208. O you who believe! Enter into Islam wholeheartedly; and do not follow the footsteps of the Shayṭān, 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.

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 Shayṭān, Allah says: ﴿and do not follow the footsteps of the Shayṭān﴾ 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 يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي ظُلُلٍ مِّنَ الْغَمَامِ وَالسَّائِبِ كَهُ وَقَضَى الْأَمْرَ  
وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ﴾ (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].

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 Shayṭân, 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.

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 be 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

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.



﴿سَلِّبْنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ وَمَنْ يُبَدِّلْ نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ﴾ (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.



﴿ زَيْنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ  
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴾ (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

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 النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيُحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا اختلفُوا فِيهِ وَمَا اختلف فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ فَهَدَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَا اختلفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾ (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 Nooh (ﷺ), 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



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.

﴿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 أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسْتَكْمِلِينَ  
الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَزُلْزَلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى 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

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?» (*Āl 'Imrān* 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.



﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ قَبِلُوا الدِّينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَى  
وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ﴾ (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.

﴿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 الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كَرْهٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَىٰ أَن تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ  
وَعَسَىٰ أَن تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (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,

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:



﴿ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ ۗ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ ۖ وَصَدُّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ ۖ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ ۗ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِندَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ ۗ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَن دِينِكُمْ إِنِ اسْتَطَاعُوا ۗ وَمَن يَرْتَدِدْ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ ۖ فَمَا كَانَ مِن دِينِهِ ۗ فَهُوَ كَافِرٌ ۗ فَأُولَٰئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۗ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿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;

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 ‘Abdullāh 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.



﴿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.



﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَتَىٰكَ يَرْجُونَ  
رَحْمَةَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴾ (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 Shayṭān. 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.

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.



﴿ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلِ الْعَفْوَ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴾ (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 jāhiliyah 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:

﴿O you who believe, intoxicants, gambling, idols and divining arrows are an abomination, of Shayṭān's handiwork; therefore avoid such [abomination], so that you might prosper.﴾ (al-Mā'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

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 الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْيَتَامَىٰ قُلْ إِصْلَاحٌ لَّهُمْ خَيْرٌ وَإِنْ تُخَالِطُوهُمْ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَأَعْنَتَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ﴾ (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-Nisā' 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

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

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 تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَةَ حَتَّىٰ تُؤْمِنَ ۚ وَلَا مُمْسِكَةً مُّؤْمِنَةً خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكَةٍ وَلَا  
 أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ ۚ وَلَا تُنكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنُوا ۚ وَلَعَبْدٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكٍ وَلَا  
 أَعْجَبَكُمْ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ ۖ وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ بِإِذْنِهِ ۖ وَبَيِّنُ  
 ءَايَاتِهِ 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.



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.



﴿وَنَسْتَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ ۗ قُلْ هُوَ أَذَىٰ فَأَعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ ۗ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوهُنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَطْهَرْنَ ۗ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ نِسَاءَكُمْ حَرَّتْ لَكُمْ فَأَتُوا حُرَّتَكُمْ أَنَّىٰ شِئْتُمْ وَقَدِمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ مُلْقَوُهُ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٢٢﴾ (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

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 ﴿ 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

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 تَجْعَلُوا اللَّهَ عُرْضَةً لِأَيْدِيكُمْ أَنْ تَبْرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَتُصَلِّحُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾ (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.

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 *mustahabb* (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.



﴿لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ﴾  
 ﴿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.



﴿لِلَّذِينَ يُؤَلُّونَ مِنْ نَسَائِهِمْ رَبْصٌ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ فَإِنْ قَامُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾  
 ﴿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

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

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.



﴿وَالسُّطَلَقَاتُ يَرْبَصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيُعْلِنْنَ مِنْهُنَّ أَحْسَنَ بَرْدِهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا وَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالرِّجَالُ عَلَيْهِمْ دَرَجَةٌ وَاللَّهُ 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.



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 *mahrams* observing hijab in front of him; he may even end up marrying one of his *mahrams* 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 *zinā* (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

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

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:

﴿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-Nisā' 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.



﴿الطَّلُقُ مَرَّتَيْنِ فَإِمْسَاكَ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٌ بِإِحْسَانٍ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَأْخُذُوا مِمَّا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ شَيْئًا إِلَّا أَنْ يَخَافَا أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا فِيمَا افْتَدَتْ بِهِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿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.

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During the jāhiliyah 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

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).



﴿ فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا تَحِلُّ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ حَتَّىٰ تَنْكِحَ زَوْجًا غَيْرَهُ ۚ فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يَتَرَاجَعَا إِنْ ظَنَّا أَنْ يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ يُبَيِّنُهَا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٠﴾ وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلِنَبَأِ أَجَلِهِنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ سَرَحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ ۗ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَارًا لِنَعْتِدُوا ۗ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ ۗ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوًا ۗ وَادْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ لِيُعْظِمَكُمْ بِهِ ۗ وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَكُلُّ شَيْءًا 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

[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 *talâq* «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»,

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 *ṭalāq*.

﴿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



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.

«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 طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمَّا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ أَنْ يَنْكِحْنَ أَزْوَاجَهُنَّ إِذَا تَرَاضَوْا بَيْنَهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ ذَلِكَ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۗ ذَلِكَُمْ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ 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.

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.



﴿ وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُنِمَّ الرِّضَاعَةَ وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ لَا تُكَلَّفُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۚ لَا تُضَارَّ وَالِدَةٌ بِوَلَدِهَا وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ لَهُ بِوَالِدِهِ ۚ وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ ۚ فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا ۚ وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ تَسْرِبِعُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَسْتُمْ مَاءَ أَيْتِمٍ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ وَالْتَقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴾ (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

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 mahram 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-Aḥqāf* 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.

«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

«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.



﴿وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ﴾ (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.

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 عَرَّضْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ خِطْبَةِ النِّسَاءِ أَوْ أَكْتَمْتُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ  
عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنْكُمْ سَتَذَكُرُنَّهُنَّ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُوَاعِدُوهُنَّ سِرًّا إِلَّا أَنْ تَقُولُوا قَوْلًا  
مَعْرُوفًا وَلَا تَعْرِضُوا عُقْدَةَ النِّكَاحِ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ الْكِتَابَ أَجَلَهُ، وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ  
يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ﴾ (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

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.





﴿لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ أَوْ تَقْرَبُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً وَمَتَّعُوهُنَّ عَلَى  
الْوَسْعِ قَدْرُهُ وَعَلَى الْمَقْتَرِ قَدْرُهُ مَتَّعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾ (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:



﴿وَإِنْ طَلَّقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ وَقَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً فَنِصْفُ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يَعْفُوكَ أَوْ يَعْفُوا الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ عُقْدَةُ النِّكَاحِ وَأَنْ تَعْفُوا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَنْسُوا الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ 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

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﴾.



﴿حَفِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْاَوْسَطَىٰ وَرُكُوعًا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ ﴿٢٣٨﴾ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرِجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَمَا عَلَّمَكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا 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 'asr – 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 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.

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.



﴿وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا وَصِيَّةً لِأَزْوَاجِهِمْ مَتَاعًا إِلَى  
الْحَوْلِ غَيْرَ إِخْرَاجٍ ۚ فَإِنْ خَرَجْنَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ فِي  
أَنْفُسِهِنَّ مِنْ مَّعْرُوفٍ ۗ وَاللَّهُ 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

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.



﴿وَالسُّطَّرَاتِ مَتَعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ﴾ ﴿٢٤١﴾ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٤٢﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٤١-٢٤٢)

- 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 الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِن دِيَارِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ فَقَالَ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ مُوتُوا ثُمَّ أَحْيَاهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢٤٢﴾ وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٣﴾ ﴾

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضْعِفُهُ لَهُمْ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً وَاللَّهُ يَقْبِضُ  
وَيَبْصُطُ 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.

«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



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 الْمَلَأِ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَى إِذْ قَالُوا لِنَبِيِّ لَهُمْ أَبْعَثْ لَنَا  
مَلِكًا نُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَالَ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ  
الْقِتَالُ أَلَّا تُقَاتِلُوا وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نُقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَدْ أُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ  
دِيَارِنَا وَأَبْنَاءِنَا فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ  
بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٤٦﴾ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا  
قَالُوا أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً  
مِّنَ الْمَالِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ  
وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مَلَكَهُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٧﴾ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ  
إِنَّ آيَةَ مَلِكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ  
وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آءَالُ مُوسَىٰ وَءَالُ هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ  
لَآيَةً لِّكُمُ إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ 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

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 (ﷺ) 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

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 Tâloot 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,

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 Tālūt 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

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 بِالْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَمَنْ لَمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنِ اغْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ ۖ فَشَرِبُوا مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ ۖ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ ۗ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُم مُّلتَقُوا اللَّهَ كَم مِّن فِتْنَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ ۗ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ يَأِذِنُ اللَّهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٢٤٩﴾ وَلَمَّا بَرَرُوا لِبِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْهَا صَبْرًا وَثَبَّتْ أقدامنا وَأَنْصَرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٥٠﴾ فَهَزَمُوهُمْ يَأِذِنُ اللَّهُ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ ۖ وَآتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَّفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٥١﴾ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ تَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ ۗ وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٢٥٢﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٤٩-٢٥٢)

- 2:249. When Tâlout 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.

- 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 ʾĪlōot became king of the Children of Israel, and became established in his position, they made preparations to fight their enemies. When ʾĪlōot 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

that they had no power or strength of their own. It also increased them in patience, because they were few and their enemies were numerous. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says:

«When they crossed the river, he» that is Ṭâloot «and those who believed with him», namely the ones who had obeyed the command of Allah and had not drunk from the river, which was forbidden, they realised how few they were and how numerous their enemies were. They said – that is, many of them said – «We do not have the strength to face Jâloot and his troops today» because they are so numerous and so well equipped.

«But those who were certain that they would meet Allah», who were people of steadfast faith and deep certainty; they sought to reassure the rest of them, calm them down and instruct them to be steadfast. «How often has a small group overcome a mighty host by Allah's leave» that is, by His will, for all matters rest with Him. The one who has real honour is the one who is honoured by Allah, and the one who is really humiliated is the one who is humiliated by Allah; hence large numbers are to no avail if He forsakes you, and small numbers do not matter if He helps you.

«And Allah is with those who are steadfast» by giving them support and help. The best means of attaining the help of Allah is being patient and steadfast for the sake of Allah. This exhortation had a great impact on their hearts, hence when Jâloot and his troops came out to fight, «they said», all of them: «Our Lord, bestow on us steadfastness» that is, strengthen our hearts, bestow patience on us and make us steadfast, so that we will not be shaken or flee; «and grant us victory over the disbelieving people». Hence we know that Jâloot and his troops were disbelievers. Allah answered their supplication, because they fulfilled the conditions of receiving a response, and He granted victory to them.

«Thus they defeated them by Allah's leave; and Dâwood» (ﷺ), who was with the troops of Ṭâloot, «slew Jâloot». He killed the king of

the disbelievers with his own hand, because of his courage, strength and steadfastness.

﴿and Allah gave him power and wisdom﴾ that is, He blessed him by making him king of the Israelites and by giving him wisdom, meaning prophethood, which included (knowledge of) the great law and the straight path. Hence He said: ﴿and taught him whatever [else] He willed﴾ of both religious and political knowledge. Allah bestowed upon him both kingship and prophethood, whereas in the case of the Prophets who came before him, kingship was given to others. When Allah (ﷻ) granted them victory, they felt secure in their land and they worshipped Allah in safety and with reassurance, because they had defeated the enemy and had gained power in the land. All of this was the result of jihad for His sake, otherwise they would not have attained that. Hence Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿Were it not for Allah restraining the people, some by means of others, the earth would indeed be filled with mischief﴾ that is, were it not for Him restraining by means of those who fight for His sake the plots of the evildoers and the transgressions of the disbelievers, the earth would be filled with mischief as a result of the disbelievers gaining control of it and establishing the rituals of disbelief, and they (the disbelievers) would prevent them (the believers) from worshipping Allah (ﷻ) and practising His religion openly.

﴿But Allah is most gracious to all the worlds﴾ as He has prescribed for them jihad in which is their happiness and protection, and He gives them power on earth by means that they know and others that they do not know.

Then Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿These are the revelations of Allah, which We recite to you in truth﴾ that is, in truth concerning which there is no doubt. This implies that we should think, learn and see things as they really are.

﴿verily you are one of the Messengers﴾. This is testimony from Allah to His Messenger (ﷺ) that part of the evidence for his message is



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 Tâloot 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

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 الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ ۚ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَىٰ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَقْتَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَلَكِنْ ائْتَلَفُوا فِيهِمْ مَنْ ءَامَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ كَفَرَ ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَقْتَلُوا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ﴾

(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