

(And stand before Allah with obedience.) we were ordered to refrain from speaking." The Group (i. e., the Hadith collections), except Ibn Majah, reported this Hadith.

The Fear Prayer

Allah said:

(فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرَجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَأَذْكُرُوا
اللَّهَ كَمَا عَلَّمَكُمْ مَا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ)

(And if you fear (an enemy), (perform Salah) on foot or riding. And when you are in safety, then remember Allah (pray) in the manner He has taught you, which you knew not (before).)

After Allah commanded His servants to perform the prayer perfectly and emphasized this commandment, He mentioned the situation where the person might not be able to perform the prayer perfectly, during battle and combat. Allah said:

(فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرَجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا)

(And if you fear (an enemy), perform Salah on foot or riding.) meaning, pray in the appropriate manner under these circumstances, whether on foot or riding and whether facing the Qiblah or otherwise. Imam Malik reported that Nafi` related that Ibn `Umar used to describe the Fear prayer when he was asked about it and would then add, "If there is intense fear, pray on foot, riding, facing the Qiblah and otherwise." Nafi` commented, "I think that he related that to the Prophet ." Al-Bukhari and Muslim reported the Hadith.

Muslim, Abu Dawud, An-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah and Ibn Jarir reported that Ibn `Abbas said, "Allah has ordained the prayer by the words of your Prophet : four (Rak` ah) while residing, two Rak` ah while traveling and one Rak` ah during times of fear." This is also the view of Al-Hasan Al-Basri, Qatadah, Ad-Dahhak, and others.

In addition, Al-Bukhari has entitled a Chapter: `Prayer while confronting the Forts and facing the Enemy'. Al-Awza`i said, "If the victory seems near and the Muslims are unable to perform the prayer (in the normal manner), they should pray by nodding each by himself. If they are unable to nod, they should delay the prayer until fighting is finished. When they feel safe, they should pray two Rak` ah. If they are unable, they should then pray one Rak` ah that includes two prostrations. If they are unable, then Takbir alone does not suffice, so they should delay the prayer until they are safe." This is the same view that Makhul held. Anas bin Malik said, "I participated in the attack on the fort of Tastar, when the light of dawn started to become clear. Suddenly, the fighting raged and the Muslims were unable to pray until the light of day spread. We then prayed (the Dawn prayer) with Abu Musa and we became victorious. I would not have been pleased if I were to gain in the life of this world and whatever is in it instead of that prayer." This is the wording of Al-Bukhari.

Prayer during the Times of Peace is performed normally

Allah said:

(فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ)

(And when you are in safety, then remember Allah (pray)) meaning, `Perform the prayer as I have commanded you by completing its bowing, prostration, standing, sitting, and with the required attention (in the heart) and supplication.' Allah said:

(كَمَا عَلَّمَكُمْ مَا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ)

(in the manner He has taught you, which you knew not (before).) meaning, just as He has endowed you, guided you and taught you about what benefits you in this life and the Hereafter, so thank and remember Him. Similarly, Allah said after He mentioned the prayer of Fear,

(فَإِذَا أَطْمَأَنَّكُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَّوْقُوتًا)

(...but when you are free from danger, perform As-Salah. Verily, As-Salah (the prayer) is enjoined on the believers at fixed hours.) (4:103)

We will mention the Hadiths about the prayer of Fear and its description in Surat An-Nisa' while mentioning Allah's statement:

(وَإِذَا كُنْتَ فِيهِمْ فَأَقِمْ لَهُمُ الصَّلَاةَ)

(When you (O Messenger Muhammad) are among them, and lead them in As-Salah (the prayer).) (4:102)

(وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَقَّؤْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا وَصِيَّةً لَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ مَتَّعًا إِلَى الْحَوْلِ غَيْرَ إِخْرَاجٍ فَإِنْ خَرَجْنَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ مِنْ مَّعْرُوفٍ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ - وَلِلْمُطَلَّقاتِ

مَتَّعٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ - كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ
اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ)

(240. And those of you who die and leave behind wives should bequeath for their wives a year's maintenance (and residence) without turning them out, but if they (wives) leave, there is no sin on you for that which they do of themselves, provided it is honorable (e.g., lawful marriage). And Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.) (241. And for divorced women, maintenance (should be provided) on reasonable (scale). This is a duty on Al-Muttaqin (the pious).) (242. Thus Allah makes clear His Ayat (Laws) to you, in order that you may understand.)

Ayah (2:240) was abrogated

The majority of the scholars said that this Ayah (2:240) was abrogated by the Ayah (2:234), what Allah said:

(يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا)

(...they (the wives) shall wait (as regards their marriage) for four months and ten days.) (2:234)

For instance, Al-Bukhari reported that Ibn Az-Zubayr said: I said to `Uthman bin `Affan:

(وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا)

(And those of you who die and leave wives behind them) was abrogated by the other Ayah (2:234). Therefore, why did you collect it (meaning, in the Qur'an)" He said, "O my nephew! I shall not change any part of the Qur'an from its place."

The question that Ibn Az-Zubayr asked `Uthman means: `If the ruling of the Ayah (2:240) was abrogated to four months (the `Iddah of the widow, and refer to 2:234), then what is the wisdom behind including it in the Qur'an, although its ruling has been abrogated If the Ayah (2:240) remains (in the Qur'an) after the Ayah that abrogated it (2:234), this might imply that its ruling is still valid.' `Uthman, the Leader of the faithful, answered him by stating that this is a matter of the revelation, which mentioned these Ayat in this order. `Therefore, I shall leave the Ayah where I found it in the Qur'an.'

Ibn Abu Hatim reported that Ibn `Abbas said about what Allah said:

(وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَقَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا وَصِيَّةً
لأَزْوَاجِهِمْ مَتَّعًا إِلَى الْحَوْلِ غَيْرَ إِخْرَاجٍ)

(And those of you who die and leave behind wives should bequeath for their wives a year's maintenance (and residence) without turning them out,) "The widow used to reside, and have her provisions provided for her for a year, in her deceased husband's house. Later, the Ayah that specified the inheritance (4:12) abrogated this Ayah (2:240), and thus the widow inherits one-fourth or one-eighth of what her (deceased) husband leaves behind."

Ibn Abu Hatim also related that `Ali bin Abu Talhah stated that Ibn `Abbas said, "When a man died and left behind a widow, she used to remain in his house for a year for her `Iddah, all the while receiving her provisions during this time. Thereafter, Allah revealed this Ayah:

(وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَقَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ
بأنفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا)

(And those of you who die and leave wives behind them, they (the wives) shall wait (as regards their marriage) for four months and ten days.) (2:234)

So, this is the `Iddah of the widow, unless she was pregnant, for her `Iddah then ends when she gives birth. Allah also said:

(وَلَهُنَّ الرُّبْعُ مِمَّا تَرَكَتُمْ إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ
كَانَ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَلَهُنَّ الثُّمُنُ مِمَّا تَرَكَتُمْ)

(In that which you leave, their (your wives') share is a fourth if you leave no child; but if you leave a child, they get an eighth of that which you leave.) (4:12)

So Allah specified the share of the widow in the inheritance and there was no need for the will or the Nafaqah (maintenance) which were mentioned in (2:240)."

Ibn Abu Hatim stated that Mujahid, Al-Hasan, `Ikrimah, Qatadah, Ad-Dahhak, Ar-Rabi` and Muqatil bin Hayyan said that the Ayah (2:240) was abrogated by:

(أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا)

(four months and ten days.) (2:234)

Al-Bukhari reported that Mujahid said that:

(وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَقَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا)

(And those of you who die and leave wives behind them) (2:234) used to be the `Iddah, and the widow had to remain with her (deceased) husband's family (during that period, i.e., four months and ten days). Then, Allah revealed:

(وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَقَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا وَصِيَّةً
لأَزْوَاجِهِمْ مَّتَعًا إِلَى الْحَوْلِ غَيْرَ إِخْرَاجٍ فَإِنْ
خَرَجْنَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ
مِنْ مَعْرُوفٍ)

(And those of you who die and leave behind wives should bequeath for their wives a year's maintenance (and residence) without turning them out, but if they (wives) leave, there is no sin on you for that which they do of themselves, provided it is honorable (e.g., lawful marriage).)

So, Allah made the rest of the year, which is seven months and twenty days, as a will and testament for her. Consequently, if she wants, she could use her right in this will and remain in the residence (for the rest of the year). Or, if she wants, she could leave the (deceased husband's) house after the four months and ten days have passed. This is the meaning of what Allah said:

(غَيْرَ إِخْرَاجٍ فَإِنْ خَرَجْنَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ)

(...without turning them out, but if they (wives) leave, there is no sin on you.)

Therefore, the required term of `Iddah is still unchanged (refer to 2:234).

`Ata' quoted Ibn `Abbas, "This Ayah (2:240) has abrogated (the requirement that) the widow spends the `Iddah with his (i.e., her deceased husband's) family. So, she spends her `Iddah wherever she wants. This is the meaning of what Allah said:

(غَيْرَ إِخْرَاجٍ)

(without turning them out,)."

`Ata' also said: "If she wants, she spends the `Iddah with his family and resides there according to the will (meaning the rest of the year). If she wants, she is allowed to leave, for Allah said:

(فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْتُمْ)

(there is no sin on you for that which they do of themselves)."

`Ata' then said: "Then (the Ayah on) the inheritance (refer to 4:12) came and abrogated the residence. Hence, the widow spends her `Iddah wherever she wants and does not have the right to residence any more."

The statement of `Ata' and those who held the view that the Ayah (2:240) was abrogated by the Ayah on the inheritance (4: 12), is only valid for more than the four months and ten days (required in 2:234). However, if they mean that the four months and ten days are not required from the deceased husband's estate, then this opinion is the subject of disagreement among the scholars. As proof, they said that the widow is required to remain in her (deceased) husband's house (for four months and ten days) according to what Malik reported from Zaynab bint Ka`b bin `Ujrah. She said that Fari`ah bint Malik bin Snan, the sister of Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri, told her that she came to Allah's Messenger asking him to return to her family's residence with Banu Khudrah. Her husband had pursued some of his servants who ran away, but when he reached the area of Al-Qadum, they killed him. She said, "So I asked Allah's Messenger if I should stay with my family in Banu Khudrah, for my (deceased) husband did not leave me a residence that he owns or Nafaqah (maintenance). Allah's Messenger answered in the positive. While I was in the room, Allah's Messenger summoned me or had someone summon me and said:

«كَيْفَ قُلْتِ»

(What did you say) I repeated the story to him about my (deceased) husband. He said:

«امْكُتِي فِي بَيْتِكَ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْكِتَابُ أَجْلَهُ»

(Stay at your home until the term reaches its end.) So I remained through the `Iddah term for four months and ten days in my (deceased husband's) house. Thereafter, `Uthman bin `Affan sent for me during his reign and asked me about this matter and I told him what happened. He made a judgment to the same effect." This Hadith was also collected by Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah. At-Tirmidhi said, "Hasan Sahih".

The Necessity of the Mut`ah (Gift) at the Time of Divorce

Allah said:

(وَالْمُطَلَّاتِ مَتْعٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ)

(And for divorced women, maintenance (should be provided) on reasonable (scale). This is a duty on Al-Muttaqin (the pious).)

`Abdur-Rahman bin Zayd bin Aslam said that when Allah's statement:

(مَتَّعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ)

(...a gift of reasonable amount is a duty on the doers of good) (2:236) was revealed, a man said, "If I want, I will be excellent and if I do not, I will not." Thereafter, Allah revealed this Ayah:

(وَالْمُطَلَّاتِ مَتَّعٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ)

(And for divorced women, maintenance (should be provided) on reasonable (scale). This is a duty on Al-Muttaqin (the pious).)

The scholars who ruled that the Mut`ah (reasonable gift) at the time of divorce is required for every divorced woman, whether she had a bridal-money appointed for her or not, and whether the marriage was consummated or not, relied on this Ayah (2:241) when they issued their ruling. This is the view taken on this subject by Sa`id bin Jubayr and several others among the Salaf and also Ibn Jarir. Hence, Allah's statement:

(لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ
أَوْ تَفْرِضُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً وَمَتَّعُوهُنَّ عَلَى الْمَوْسِعِ
قَدْرُهُ وَعَلَى الْمُقْتِرِ قَدْرُهُ مَتَّعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا
عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ)

(There is no sin on you, if you divorce women while yet you have not touched (had sexual relation with) them, nor appointed for them their due (dowry). But bestow on them (a suitable gift), the rich according to his means, and the poor according to his means, a gift of reasonable amount is a duty on the doers of good.) (2:236) only mentions some specifics of this general ruling.

Allah then said:

(كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لِيُتَّقِيَ)

(Thus Allah makes clear His Ayat (Laws) to you,) meaning, what He allows, forbids, requires, His set limits, His commandments and His prohibitions are all explained and made plain and clear for you. He did not leave any matter in general terms if you needed the specifics,

(لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ)

(in order that you may understand.) meaning, understand and comprehend.

(أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ
حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ فَقَالَ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ مُوتُوا ثُمَّ أَحْيَاهُمْ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ لَدُوٌّ فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
يَشْكُرُونَ - وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ
اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ - مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا
حَسَنًا فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً وَاللَّهُ يَقْبِضُ
وَيَبْسُطُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ)

(243. Did you (O Muhammad) not think of those who went forth from their homes in the thousands, fearing death Allah said to them, "Die". And then He restored them to life. Truly, Allah is full of bounty to mankind, but most men thank not.) (244. And fight in the way of Allah and know that Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower.) (245. Who is he that will lend to Allah a goodly loan so that He may multiply it to him many times And it is Allah that decreases or increases (your provisions), and unto Him you shall return.)

The Story of the Dead People

Ibn Abu Hatim related that Ibn `Abbas said that these people mentioned herein, were the residents of a village called Dawardan. `Ali bin `Asim said that they were from Dawardan, a village several miles away from Wasit (in Iraq).

In his Tafsir, Waki` bin Jarrah said that Ibn `Abbas commented,

(أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ
حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ)

(Did you (O Muhammad) not think of those who went forth from their homes in thousands, fearing death) that they were four thousand persons who escaped the plague (that broke out in their land). They said, "We should go to a land that is free of death!" When they reached a certain area, Allah said to them:

(مُوتُوا)

("Die.") and they all died. Afterwards, one of the Prophets passed by them and supplicated to Allah to resurrect them and Allah brought them back to life. So, Allah stated:

(أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ
حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ)

r(Did you (O Muhammad) not think of those who went forth from their homes in the thousands, fearing death)

Furthermore, several scholars among the Salaf said that these people were the residents of a city during the time of the Children of Israel. The weather in their land did not suit them and an epidemic broke out. They fled their land fearing death and took refuge in the wilderness. They later arrived at a fertile valley and they filled what is between its two sides. Then Allah sent two angels to them, one from the lower side and the other from the upper side of the valley. The angels screamed once and all the people died instantly, just as the death of one man. They were later moved to a different place, where walls and graves were built around them. They all perished, and their bodies rotted and disintegrated. Long afterwards, one of the Prophets of the Children of Israel, whose name was Hizqil (Ezekiel), passed by them and asked Allah to bring them back to life by his hand. Allah accepted his supplication and commanded him to say, "O rotted bones, Allah commands you to come together." The bones of every body were brought together. Allah then commanded him to say, "O bones, Allah commands you to be covered with flesh, nerves and skin." That also happened while Hizqil was watching. Allah then commanded him to say, "O souls, Allah commands you to return, each to the body that it used to inhabit." They all came back to life, looked around and proclaimed, "All praise is due to You (O Allah!) and there is no deity worthy of worship except You." Allah brought them back to life after they had perished long ago.

We should state that bringing these people back to life is a clear proof that physical resurrection shall occur on the Day of Resurrection. This is why Allah said:

(إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَدُوٌّ فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ)

(Truly, Allah is full of bounty to mankind,) meaning, in that He shows them His great signs, sound proofs and clear evidences. Yet,

(وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ)

(but most men thank not.) as they do not thank Allah for what He has given them with in their worldly life and religious affairs.

The story of the dead people (2:244 above) also indicates that no caution can ever avert destiny and that there is no refuge from Allah, but to Allah Himself. These people departed from their land fleeing the epidemic and seeking to enjoy a long life. What they earned was the opposite of what they sought, as death came quickly and instantaneously and seized them all.

There is an authentic Hadith that Imam Ahmad reported that `Abdullah bin `Abbas said that `Umar bin Al-Khattab once went to Ash-Sham (Syria). When he reached the area of Sargh, he was met by the commanders of the army: Abu `Ubaydah bin Jarrah and his companions. They told him that the plague had broken out in Ash-Sham. The Hadith then mentioned that `Abdur-Rahman bin `Awf, who was away attending to some of his affairs, came and said, "I have knowledge regarding this matter. I heard Allah's Messenger say:

«إِذَا كَانَ بِأَرْضٍ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا فَلَا تَخْرُجُوا فِرَارًا مِنْهُ، وَإِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ بِهِ بِأَرْضٍ فَلَا تَقْدَمُوا عَلَيْهِ»

(If it (the plague) breaks out in a land that you are in, do not leave that land to escape from it. If you hear about it in a land, do not enter it.)

`Umar then thanked Allah and went back. This Hadith is also reported in the Sahihayn.

Abandoning Jihad does not alter Destiny

Allah said:

«وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ»

(And fight in the way of Allah and know that Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower.)

This Ayah indicates that just as caution does not alter destiny, abandoning Jihad will neither bring the appointed term closer nor delay it. Rather, destiny and the appointed provisions are fixed and shall never be changed or altered, neither by addition nor deletion. Similarly, Allah said:

«الَّذِينَ قَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَقَعَدُوا لَوْ أَطَاعُونَا مَا قُتِلُوا قُلْ فَادْرَءُوا عَنْ أَنْفُسِكُمُ الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ»

((They are) the ones who said about their killed brethren while they themselves sat (at home): "If only they had listened to us, they would not have been killed." Say: "Avert death from your own selves, if you speak the truth.") (3:168)

Allah said:

وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا لِمَ كَتَبْتَ عَلَيْنَا الْقِتَالَ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنَا
إِلَى أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ قُلْ مَتَّعُ الدُّنْيَا قَلِيلٌ وَالْآخِرَةُ
خَيْرٌ لِّمَنِ اتَّقَى وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا أَيِنَّمَا تَكُونُوا
يُذْرِكُكُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّشِيدَةٍ

(They say: "Our Lord! Why have you ordained for us fighting Would that you had granted us respite for a short period" Say: "Short is the enjoyment of this world. The Hereafter is (far) better for him who fears Allah, and you shall not be dealt with unjustly even equal to the Fatila (a scaly thread in the long slit of a date stone). Wheresoever you may be, death will overtake you even if you are in fortresses built up strong and high!") (4:77, 78)

Abu Sulayman, Khalid bin Al-Walid, the commander of the Muslim armies, the veteran among Muslim soldiers, the protector of Islam and the Sword of Allah that was raised above His enemies, said while dying, "I have participated in so-and-so number of battles. There is not a part of my body, but suffered a shot (of an arrow), a stab (of a spear) or a strike (of a sword). Yet, here I am, I die on my bed just as the camel dies! May the eyes of the cowards never taste sleep." He, may Allah be pleased with him, was sorry and in pain because he did not die as martyr in battle. He was sad that he had to die on his bed!

The Good Loan and its Reward

Allah said:

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَاعِفَهُ
لَهُ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً

(Who is he that will lend to Allah a goodly loan so that He may multiply it to him many times)

In this Ayah, Allah encourages His servants to spend in His cause. Allah mentioned this same Ayah in several other parts of His Glorious Qur'an. The Hadith that mentions that Allah descends (every night down on the nearest heaven to us when the last third of the night remains) states that Allah says:

«مَنْ يُقْرِضُ غَيْرَ عَدِيمٍ وَلَا ظَلُومٍ»

(Who would give a loan to He Who is neither poor nor unjust.)

Allah's statement :

(فِيضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً)

(He may multiply it to him many times), is similar to His statement :

(مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنبُلَةٍ مِائَةٌ حَبَّةٌ وَاللَّهُ يُضَعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ)

(The likeness of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah, is as the likeness of a grain (of corn); it grows seven ears, and each ear has a hundred grains. Allah gives manifold increase to whom He wills.) (2:261)

We will mention this Ayah later on. Allah then said:

(وَاللَّهُ يَقِضُ وَيَبْسُطُ)

(And it is Allah that decreases or increases (your provisions),) meaning, 'Spend (in Allah's cause) and do not be anxious.' Certainly, Allah is the Sustainer Who increases or decreases the provisions to whomever He wills among His servants. Allah's wisdom is perfect, and,

(وَالِيهِ تُرْجَعُونَ)

(and unto Him you shall return.) on the Day of Resurrection.

(أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الْمَلَإِ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَى إِذْ قَالُوا لِنَبِيِّهِمْ إِنَّهُمْ ابْعَثْ لَنَا مَلِكًا يُقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَالَ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ أَلَّا تُقَاتِلُوا قَالُوا وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نُقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَدْ أُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ دِيَارِنَا وَأَبْنَائِنَا فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمْ

الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ
(

(246. Have you not thought about the group of the Children of Israel after (the time of) Musa When they said to a Prophet of theirs, "Appoint for us a king and we will fight in Allah's way." He said, "Would you then refrain from fighting, if fighting was prescribed for you" They said, "Why should we not fight in Allah's way while we have been driven out of our homes and our children (families have been taken as captives)" But when fighting was ordered for them, they turned away, all except a few of them. And Allah is All-Aware of the wrongdoers.)

The Story of the Jews Who sought a King to be appointed over Them

Mujahid said that the Prophet (mentioned in the Ayah 2:246 above) is Shamwil (Samuel). Wahb bin Munabbih said: The Children of Israel remained on the straight path for a period of time after Moses. They then innovated in the religion and some of them even worshipped the idols. Yet, there were always Prophets sent among them who would command them to work righteous deeds, refrain from doing evil and who would rule them according to the commands of the Torah. When they (Israelites) committed the evil that they committed, Allah caused their enemies to overwhelm them, and many fatalities fell among them as a consequence. Their enemies also captured a great number of them, and took over large areas of their land. Earlier, anyone who would fight the Israelites would lose, because they had the Torah and the Tabut, which they inherited generation after generation ever since the time of Moses, who spoke to Allah directly. Yet, the Israelites kept indulging in misguidance until some king took the Tabut from them during a battle. That king also took possession of the Torah, and only a few of the Israelites who memorized it remained. The prophethood halted among their various tribes and only a pregnant woman remained of the offspring of Lavi (Levi), in whom the prophethood still appeared. Her husband had been killed, so the Israelites kept her in a house so that Allah may give her a boy, who would be their Prophet. The woman also kept invoking Allah to grant her a boy. Allah heard her pleas and gave her a boy whom she called `Shamwil' meaning `Allah has heard my pleas.' Some people said that the boy's name was Sham`un (Simeon), which also has a similar meaning.

As that boy grew, Allah raised him to be a righteous person. When he reached the age of prophethood, Allah revealed to him and commanded him to call (his people) to Him and to His Tawhid (Oneness). Shamwil called the Children of Israel (to Allah) and they asked him to appoint a king over them so that they could fight their enemies under his command. The kingship had also ended among them. Their Prophet said to them, "What if Allah appoints a king over you, would you fulfill your vow to fight under his command"

قَالُوا وَمَا لَنَا إِلَّا نُقْتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَدْ
أُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ دِيَارِنَا وَأَبْنَائِنَا

(They said, "Why should we not fight in Allah's way while we have been driven out of our homes and our children") meaning, `After our land had been confiscated and our children had been taken from us' Allah said:

(قَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ)

(But when fighting was ordered for them, they turned away, all except a few of them. And Allah is All-Aware of the wrongdoers) meaning, only a few of them kept their promise, but the majority abandoned Jihad and Allah has full knowledge of them.

(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 مُلْكَهُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ)

(247. And their Prophet said to them, "Indeed Allah has appointed Talut (Saul) as a king over you." They said, "How can he be a king over us when we are fitter than him for the kingdom, and he has not been given enough wealth." He said: "Verily, Allah has chosen him above you and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature. And Allah grants His kingdom to whom He wills. And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower.")

When the Israelites asked their Prophet to appoint a king over them, he appointed Talut (Saul), who was then a soldier. But, Talut was not a descendant of the house of kings among them, which was exclusively in the offspring of Yahudha (Judah). This is why they said:

(أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا)

(How can he be a king over us) meaning, how can he be the king for us,

(وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِّنَ
الْمَالِ)

(when we are fitter than him for the kingdom, and he has not been given enough wealth) They said that Talut was also poor and did not have the wealth that justifies him being king. Some people stated that Talut used to bring water to the people, while others stated that his profession was dyeing skins. The Jews, thus, disputed with their Prophet while they were supposed to obey him and to say good words to him.

Their Prophet answered them:

(إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ)

(Verily, Allah has chosen him above you) meaning, 'Allah chose Talut from amongst you while having better knowledge about him.' Their Prophet stated, "I did not choose Talut to be your king on my own. Rather, Allah has commanded that upon your request." Further:

(وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ)

(...and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature.) meaning, 'Talut is more knowledgeable and honorable than you, and stronger and more patient during combat, and has more knowledge of warfare. In short, he has more knowledge and is stronger than you are. The king should have sufficient knowledge, be fair looking and should have a strong soul and body.' He then said:

(وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مَلَكَهُ مَن يَشَاءُ)

(And Allah grants His kingdom to whom He wills.) meaning, Allah Alone is the Supreme Authority Who does what He wills and no one can ask Him about His actions, while they will be asked (about their actions by Him). This is because Allah has perfect knowledge, wisdom and kindness with His creation. Allah said:

(وَاللَّهُ وَسِعَ عَلِيمٌ)

(And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower.) meaning, His favor is encompassing and He grants His mercy to whom He wills. He also knows those who deserve to be kings and those who do not deserve it.

(وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ

وَعَالُ هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً
لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ)

b(248. And their Prophet said to them: "Verily! The sign of His kingdom is that there shall come to you At-Tabut, wherein is Sakinah (peace and reassurance) from your Lord and a remnant of that which Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) left behind, carried by the angels. Verily, in this is a sign for you if you are indeed believers.)

Their Prophet then proclaimed, "The sign of the blessings of Talut's kingship over you is that Allah will give you back the Tabut (wooden box) that has been taken from you." Allah said:

(فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ)

(wherein is Sakinah from your Lord) meaning, peace (or grace) and reassurance. `Abdur-Razzaq stated that Qatadah said:

(فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ)

(wherein is Sakinah) means grace. In addition, Ar-Rabi` said that Sakinah means mercy. This is also the meaning given by Ibn `Abbas, as Al-`Awfi narrated.

Allah then said:

(وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ)

(...and a remnant of that which Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) left behind,)

Ibn Jarir related that Ibn `Abbas said about this Ayah:

(وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ)

(...and a remnant of that which Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) left behind,) Meaning, Moses' staff and the remnants of the Tablets. This is the same Tafsir of Qatadah, As-Suddi, Ar-Rabi` bin Anas and `Ikrimah, who added, "And also the Torah." `Abdur-Razzaq said that he asked Ath-Thawri about the meaning of,

(وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ)

(...and a remnant of that which Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) left behind,)

Ath-Thawri said, "Some said that it contained a pot of manna and the remnants of the Tablets, while some others said that it contained (Moses') staff and two shoes (and refer to 20:12)."

Allah then said:

(تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ)

(...carried by the angels.)

Ibn Jurayj stated that Ibn `Abbas said, "The angels came down while carrying the Tabut between the sky and the earth, until they placed it before Talut while the people were watching." As-Suddi said, "The Tabut was brought to Talut's house, so the people believed in the prophethood of Sham`un (Simeon) and obeyed Talut"

The Prophet then said:

(إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُمْ)

(Verily, in this is a sign for you) testifying to my truth in what I was sent with, my prophethood, and my command to you to obey Talut,

(إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ)

(if you are indeed believers.) in Allah and the Hereafter."

(فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَمَنْ لَمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنْ اغْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ فَشَرَبُوا مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ) (p, %30(raster=Rrgjim=) " ز س

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(249. Then when Talut set out with the army, he said: "Verily, Allah will try you by a river. So whoever drinks thereof, he is not of me; and whoever tastes it not, he is of me, except him who takes (thereof) in the hollow of his hand." Yet, they drank thereof, all, except a few of them. So when he had crossed it (the river), he and those who believed with him, they said: "We have no power this day against Jalut (Goliath) and his hosts." But those who knew with certainty that they were going to meet Allah, said: "How often has a small group overcome a mighty host by Allah's leave" And Allah is with As-Sabirin (the patient).)

Allah states that Talut, the king of the Children of Israel, marched forth with his soldiers and the Israelites who obeyed him. His army was of eighty thousand then, according to As-Suddi, but Allah knows best. Talut said:

(إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ)

(Verily, Allah will try you) meaning, He will test you with a river, which flowed between Jordan and Palestine, i.e. , the Shari` ah river, according to Ibn ` Abbas and others. He continued,

(فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي)

(So whoever drinks thereof, he is not of me;) meaning, shall not accompany me today,

(لَمْ يَطْعَمَهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنْ اغْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ)

(and whoever tastes it not, he is of me, except him who takes (thereof) in the hollow of his hand.) meaning, there is no harm in this case. Allah then said:

(فَشَرِبُوا مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ)

(Yet, they drank thereof, all, except a few of them.)

Ibn Jurayj stated that Ibn ` Abbas commented, "Whoever took some of it (the river's water) in the hollow of his hand, quenched his thirst; as for those who drank freely from it, their thirst was not quenched."

Ibn Jarir reported that Al-Bara' bin ` Azib said, "We used to say that the Companions of Muhammad who accompanied him on the battle of Badr were more than three hundred and ten, just as many as the soldiers who crossed the river with Talut. Only those who believed crossed the river with him." Al-Bukhari also reported this.

This is why Allah said:

(قَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ قَالُوا لَا
طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ)

(So when he had crossed it (the river), he and those who believed with him, they said: "We have no power this day against Jalut (Goliath) and his hosts.")

This Ayah indicates that the Israelites (who remained with Saul) thought that they were few in the face of their enemy who were many then. So, their knowledgeable scholars strengthened their resolve by stating that Allah's promise is true and that triumph comes from Allah Alone, not from the large numbers or the adequacy of the supplies. They said to them:

(كَمْ مِّنْ فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ
مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ)

("How often has a small group overcome a mighty host by Allah's leave" And Allah is with As-Sabirin (the patient).)

(وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا لِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ
عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ
الْكَافِرِينَ- فَهَزَمُوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُودُ
جَالُوتَ وَآتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا
يَشَاءُ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ
لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى
الْعَالَمِينَ- تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ
وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ V

(250. And when they advanced to meet Jalut (Goliath) and his forces, they invoked: "Our Lord! Pour forth on us patience, and set firm our feet and make us victorious over the disbelieving

people.") (251. So they routed them by Allah's leave and Dawud (David) killed Jalut (Goliath), and Allah gave him (Dawud) the kingdom after the death of Talut and Samuel and Al-Hikmah (prophethood), and taught him of that which He willed. And if Allah did not check one set of people by means of another, the earth would indeed be full of mischief. But Allah is full of bounty to the `Alamin (mankind, Jinn and all that exists.) (252. These are the verses of Allah, We recite them to you (O Muhammad) in truth, and surely, you are one of the Messengers (of Allah.)

When the faithful party, who were few under the command of Talut, faced their enemy, who were many under the command of Jalut,

(قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أفرغ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا)

(they invoked: "Our Lord! Pour forth on us patience...") meaning, send down patience on us from You.

(وَتَبَّتْ أقدامَنَا)

(and set firm our feet) meaning, against the enemy and save us from running away and from feebleness,

(وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكافِرِينَ)

(and make us victorious over the disbelieving people.)

Allah said:

(فَهَزَمُوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ)

(So they routed them by Allah's leave) meaning, they defeated and overwhelmed them by Allah's aid and support. Then,

(وَقَتَلَ دَاوُدُ جَالوتَ)

(and Dawud killed Jalut)

Israelite accounts claimed that (Prophet) David killed Goliath with a slingshot that he had, which he launched at Goliath causing his death.

Talut promised that whoever killed Jalut, would marry his daughter and would share his kingship and authority. He kept his promise. Later, the kingship was transferred to Prophet Dawud in addition to being granted Prophethood by Allah. So, Allah said:

(وَأَتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ)

(...and Allah gave him (Dawud) the kingdom) that Talut had and,

(وَالْحِكْمَةَ)

(and Al-Hikmah) that comes with the prophethood, meaning, after Shamwil. Allah then said:

(وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ)

(and taught him of that which He willed.) meaning, what He willed of the knowledge that He bestowed on (Prophet) Dawud.

Next, Allah said:

(وَلَوْلَا دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَفَسَدَتِ
الْأَرْضُ)

(And if Allah did not check one set of people by means of another, the earth would indeed be full of mischief.)

This Ayah indicates that if it were not for the fact that Allah checks one set of people with another, such as when Talut and the bravery of Dawud helped the Children of Israel (against Goliath), then people would have perished. Similarly, Allah said:

(وَلَوْلَا دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَهْجَمَتِ
صَوْمِعُ وَيَيْعُ وَصَلَوَاتُ وَمَسْجِدُ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ
اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا)

(For had it not been that Allah checks one set of people by means of another, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and Masjids, wherein the Name of Allah is mentioned much, would surely, have been pulled down.) (22:40)

Allah then said:

(وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ)

(But Allah is full of bounty to the `Alamin (mankind, Jinn and all that exists)) meaning, by His mercy and favor He fixes some of them by some others. Surely, Allah has the wisdom, the supreme authority and the clear proof against His creation in all of His actions and statements.

Allah said:

(تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ
الْمُرْسَلِينَ)

(These are the verses of Allah, We recite them to you (O Muhammad) in truth, and surely, you are one of the Messengers (of Allah).)

This Ayah states, `These Ayat (verses) of Allah that We have narrated for you in truth conform to the exact manner that these stories have occurred and to the truth that still remain in the (Divine) Books that the scholars of the Children of Israel have and know. Allah said: O Muhammad,

(وَإِنَّكَ)

(you are)

(لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ)

(one of the Messengers (of Allah)) emphatically stating the truth of his prophethood

(تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ مِنْهُمْ
مَنْ كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ وَءَاتَيْنَا
عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ
وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا اقْتَتَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ
مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَلَكِنْ اخْتَلَفُوا فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ

ءَامَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ كَفَرَ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا اقْتَتَلُوا
وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ)

(253. Those Messengers! We preferred some of them to others; to some of them Allah spoke (directly); others He raised to degrees (of honor); and to `Isa, the son of Maryam, We gave clear proofs and evidences, and supported him with Ruh-il-Qudus Jibril . If Allah had willed, succeeding generations would not have fought against each other, after clear Verses of Allah had come to them, but they differed some of them believed and others disbelieved. If Allah had willed, they would not have fought against one another, but Allah does what He wills.)

Allah Honored Some Prophets Above Others

Allah states that He has honored some Prophets to others. For instance, Allah said,

(وَلَقَدْ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَ النَّبِيِّينَ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَّءَاتَيْنَا
دَاوُدَ زَبُورًا)

(And indeed, We have preferred some of the Prophets above others, and to Dawud We gave the Zabur (Psalms)) 17:55 .

In the Ayah above, Allah said,

(تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ مِّنْهُمْ
مَّن كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ)

(Those Messengers! We preferred some of them to others; to some of them Allah spoke (directly)) meaning, Musa and Muhammad , and also Adam according to a Hadith recorded in Sahih Ibn Hibban from Abu Dharr.

(وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ)

(Others He raised to degrees (of honor)) as is evident in the Hadith about the Isra' journey, when the Messenger of Allah saw the Prophets in the various heavens according to their rank with Allah.

If somebody asks about the collective meaning of this Ayah and the Hadith that the Two Sahihs collected from Abu Hurayrah which states, "Once, a Muslim man and a Jew had an argument and the Jew said, `No, by Him Who gave Musa superiority over all human beings!' Hearing him,

the Muslim man raised his hand and slapped the Jew on his face and said, `Over Muhammad too, O evil one! The Jew went to the Prophet and complained to him and the Prophet said,

«لَا تُفَضِّلُونِي عَلَى الْأَنْبِيَاءِ، فَإِنَّ النَّاسَ يَصْعَقُونَ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَأَكُونُ أَوَّلَ مَنْ يُفِيقُ، فَأَجِدُ مُوسَى
بَاطِشًا بِقَائِمَةِ الْعَرْشِ، فَلَا أُدْرِي أَفَاقَ قَبْلِي أَمْ
جُوزِي بِصَعْفَةِ الطُّورِ؟ فَلَا تُفَضِّلُونِي عَلَى
الْأَنْبِيَاءِ»

(Don't give me superiority above the Prophets, for the people will become unconscious on the Day of Resurrection, and I will be the first to be resurrected to see Musa holding on to the pillar of Allah's Throne. I will not know whether the unconsciousness Musa suffered on the Day of the Trumpet sufficed for him, or if he got up before me. So, do not give me superiority above the Prophets.) In another narration, the Prophet said, (Do not give superiority to some Prophets above others.)

The answer to this question is that this Hadith prohibits preferring some Prophets above others in cases of dispute and argument, such as the incident mentioned in the Hadith. The Hadith indicates that it is not up to creation to decide which Prophet is better, for this is Allah's decision. The creation is only required to submit to, obey and believe in Allah's decision.

Allah's statement,

(وَأَتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ)

(And We gave `Isa, the son of Maryam, clear signs) refers to the proofs and unequivocal evidences that testify to the truth that `Isa delivered to the Children of Israel, thus testifying that he was Allah's servant and His Messenger to them.

(وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ)

(And supported him with Ruh-il-Qudus) meaning Allah aided `Isa with Jibil, peace be upon him. Allah then said,

(وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا اقْتَتَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَلَكِنْ اخْتَلَفُوا فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ آمَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ كَفَرَ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا اقْتَتَلُوا)

(If Allah had willed, succeeding generations would not have fought against each other, after clear Verses of Allah had come to them, but they differed some of them believed and others disbelieved. If Allah had willed, they would not have fought against one another.) meaning all this happened by Allah's decree, and this is why He said next,

(وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ)

(But Allah does what He wills.)

(يَأْيُهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعٌ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٌ وَلَا شَفَعَةٌ وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ)

(254. O you who believe! Spend of that with which We have provided for you, before a Day comes when there will be no bargaining, nor friendship, nor intercession. And it is the disbelievers who are the wrongdoers.)

Allah commands His servants to spend for His sake, in the path of righteousness, from what He has granted them, so that they acquire and keep the reward of this righteous deed with their Lord and King. Let them rush to perform this deed in this life,

(مِّن قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ)

(before a Day comes) meaning, the Day of Resurrection,

(لَا بَيْعٌ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٌ وَلَا شَفَعَةٌ)

(when there will be no bargaining, nor friendship, nor intercession.)

This Ayah indicates that on that Day, no one will be able to bargain on behalf of himself or ransom himself with any amount, even if it was the earth's fill of gold; nor will his friendship or relation to anyone benefit him. Similarly, Allah said,

(فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَا أَنْسَبَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلَا يَتَسَاءَلُونَ)

(Then, when the Trumpet is blown, there will be no kinship among them that Day, nor will they ask of one another) 23:101 .

(وَلَا شَفَعَةً)

(Nor intercession) meaning, they will not benefit by the intercession of anyone.

Allah's statement,

(وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ)

(and it is the disbelievers who are the wrongdoers) indicates that no injustice is worse than meeting Allah on that Day while a disbeliever. Ibn Abi Hatim recorded that `Ata' bin Dinar said, "All thanks are due to Allah Who said,

(وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ)

(and it is the disbelievers who are the wrongdoers) but did not say, `And it is the wrongdoers who are the disbelievers.'"

(اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا

شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا
يَؤُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

(255. Allah! None has the right to be worshipped but He, the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His permission He knows what happens to them (His creatures) in this world, and what will happen to them in the Hereafter. And they will never compass anything of His Knowledge except that which He wills. His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. And He is the Most High, the Most Great.)

The Virtue of Ayat Al-Kursi

This is Ayat Al-Kursi and tremendous virtues have been associated with it, for the authentic Hadith describes it as 'the greatest Ayah in the Book of Allah.' Imam Ahmad recorded that 'Ubayy bin Ka'b said that the Prophet asked him about the greatest Ayah in the Book of Allah, and 'Ubayy answered, "Allah and His Messenger know better." When the Prophet repeated his question several times, 'Ubayy said, "Ayat Al-Kursi." The Prophet commented,

«لِيَهْنِكَ الْعِلْمُ أَبَا الْمُنْذِرِ، وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ، إِنَّ
لَهَا لِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ، تُقَدِّسُ الْمَلِكَ عِنْدَ سَاقِ
الْعَرْشِ»

(Congratulations for having knowledge, O Abu Al-Mundhir! By He in Whose Hand is my soul! This Ayah has a tongue and two lips with which she praises the King (Allah) next to the leg of the Throne.)

This Hadith was also collected by Muslim, but he did not include the part that starts with, "By He in Whose Hand..."

Imam Ahmad recorded that Abu Ayyub said that he had some dates and a Ghoul used to take some, and he complained to the Prophet. The Prophet said to him, "When you see her, say, 'In the Name of Allah, answer to the Messenger of Allah.'" Abu Ayyub said that when she came again, he said these words and he was able to grab her. She begged, "I will not come again," so Abu Ayyub released her. Abu Ayyub went to the Prophet and the Prophet asked him, "What did your prisoner do?" Abu Ayyub said, "I grabbed her and she said twice, 'I will not come again,' and I released her." The Prophet said, "She will come back." Abu Ayyub said, "So I grabbed her twice or three times, yet each time I would release her when she vowed not to come back. I would go to the Prophet who would ask me, 'What is the news of your prisoner?' I would say, 'I grabbed her, then released her when she said that she would not return.' The Prophet would say that she would return. Once, I grabbed her and she said, 'Release me and I will teach you something to recite so that no harm touches you, that is, Ayat Al-Kursi.' Abu Ayyub went to the Prophet and told him, and the Prophet said, "She is liar, but she told the truth." At-Tirmidhi

recorded this Hadith in the chapter of the virtues of the Qur'an and said, "Hasan Gharib." In Arabic, 'Ghoul' refers to the Jinn when they appear at night.

Al-Bukhari recorded a similar story in his Sahih from Abu Hurayrah, in the chapters on the virtues of the Qur'an and the description of Shaytan. In this narration, Abu Hurayrah said,

"Allah's Messenger assigned me to keep watch over the Sadaqah (charity) of Ramadan. A person snuck in and started taking handfuls of foodstuff. I caught him and said, 'By Allah, I will take you to Allah's Messenger.' He said, 'Release me, for I am meek and have many dependents and am in great need.' I released him, and in the morning Allah's Messenger asked me, 'What did your prisoner do yesterday, O Abu Hurayrah?' I said, 'O Allah's Messenger! He complained of being needy and of having many dependents, so I pitied him and let him go.' Allah's Messenger said, 'Indeed, he told you a lie and will be coming again.' I believed that he would show up again, for Allah's Messenger had told me that he would return. So, I watched for him. When he (showed up and) started stealing handfuls of foodstuff, I caught hold of him again and said, 'I will definitely take you to Allah's Messenger.' He said, 'Leave me, for I am very needy and have many dependents. I promise I will not come back again.' I pitied him and let him go. In the morning Allah's Messenger asked me, 'What did your prisoner do last night, O Abu Hurayrah?' I replied, 'O Allah's Messenger! He complained of his great need and of too many dependents, so I took pity on him and set him free.' Allah's Messenger said, 'Verily, he told you a lie; he will return.' I waited for him attentively for the third time, and when he (came and) started stealing handfuls of the foodstuff, I caught hold of him and said, 'I will surely take you to Allah's Messenger as it is the third time you promised not to return, yet you returned.' He said, 'Let me teach you some words which Allah will give you benefit from.' I asked, 'What are they?' He replied, 'Whenever you go to bed, recite Ayat Al-Kursi- Allahu la ilaha illa Huwal-Hayyul-Qayyum, till you finish the whole verse. (If you do so), Allah will appoint a guard for you who will stay with you, and no Shaytan will come near you until morning.' So, I released him. In the morning, Allah's Messenger asked, 'What did your prisoner do yesterday?' I replied, 'O Allah's Messenger! He claimed that he would teach me some words by which Allah will grant me some benefit, so I let him go.' Allah's Messenger asked, 'What are they?' I replied, 'He said to me: Whenever you go to bed, recite Ayat Al-Kursi from the beginning to the end, Allahu la ilaha illa Huwal-Hayyul-Qayyum. He further said to me: (If you do so), Allah will appoint a guard for you who will stay with you, and no Shaytan will come near you until morning.' (One of the narrators) then commented that they (the Companions) were very keen to do good deeds. The Prophet said, 'He spoke the truth, although he is a liar. Do you know whom you were talking to, these three nights, O Abu Hurayrah?' Abu Hurayrah said, 'No.' He said, 'It was Shaytan.'" An-Nasa'i also recorded this Hadith in Al-Yawm wa Al-Laylah.

Allah's Greatest Name is in Ayat Al-Kursi

Imam Ahmad recorded that Asma' bint Yazid bin As-Sakan said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah say about these two Ayat,

(اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ)

(Allah! None has the right to be worshipped but He, the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists) 2:255 , and,

(الم - ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ)

(Alif-Lam-Mim. Allah! None has the right to be worshipped but He, the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists) 3:1-2 ,

«إِنَّ فِيهِمَا اسْمَ اللَّهِ الْأَعْظَمِ»

(They contain Allah's Greatest Name.)

This is also the narration collected by Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, and At-Tirmidhi said, "Hasan Sahih".

Further, Ibn Marduwyah recorded that Abu Umamah reported that the Prophet said,

«اسْمُ اللَّهِ الْأَعْظَمُ، الَّذِي إِذَا دُعِيَ بِهِ أَجَابَ، فِي ثَلَاثِ سُورَةِ الْبَقَرَةِ وَآلِ عِمْرَانَ وَطِهِ»

(Allah's Greatest Name, if He was supplicated with it, He answers the supplication, is in three Surahs - Al-Baqarah, Al`Imran and Ta-Ha.)

Hisham bin `Ammar, the Khatib (orator) of Damascus (one of the narrators in the above narration), said, "As for Al-Baqarah, it is in,

(اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ)

(Allah! None has the right to be worshipped but He, the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists) 2:255 ; in Al`Imran, it is in,

(الم - ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ)

(Alif-Lam-Mim. Allah! None has the right to be worshipped but He, the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists) 3:1-2 , while in Ta-Ha, it is in,

(وَعَنَتِ الْوُجُوهُ لِلْحَيِّ الْقَيُّومِ)

(And (all) faces shall be humbled before (Allah), the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists) 20:111 ."

Ayat Al-Kursi has Ten Complete Arabic Sentences 1. Allah's statement,

(اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ)

(Allah! None has the right to be worshipped but He) mentions that Allah is the One and Only Lord of all creation. 2. Allah's statement,

(الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ)

(Al-Hayyul-Qayyum) testifies that Allah is the Ever Living, Who never dies, Who sustains everyone and everything. All creation stands in need of Allah and totally relies on Him, while He is the Most Rich, Who stands in need of nothing created. Similarly, Allah said,

(وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ أَنْ تَقُومَ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ بِأَمْرِهِ)

(And among His signs is that the heaven and the earth stand by His command) 30:25 . 3. Allah's statement,

(لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ)

(Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him) means, no shortcoming, unawareness or ignorance ever touches Allah. Rather, He is aware of, and controls what every soul earns, has perfect watch over everything, nothing escapes His knowledge, and no secret matter is secret to Him. Among His perfect attributes, is the fact that He is never effected by slumber or sleep. Therefore, Allah's statement,

(لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ)

(Neither slumber overtakes Him) indicates that no unawareness due to slumber ever overtakes Allah. Allah said afterwards,

(وَلَا نَوْمٌ)

(nor sleep), which is stronger than slumber. It is recorded in the Sahih that Abu Musa said, "The Messenger of Allah delivered a speech regarding four words:

«إِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَهَلَالٌ بِالنَّوْمِ، وَلَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُ أَنْ يَنَامَ،
يَخْفِضُ الْقِسْطَ وَيَرْفَعُهُ، يُرْفَعُ إِلَيْهِ عَمَلُ النَّهَارِ

قَبْلَ عَمَلِ اللَّيْلِ، وَعَمَلُ اللَّيْلِ قَبْلَ عَمَلِ النَّهَارِ،
حِجَابُهُ النُّورُ أَوْ النَّارُ لَوْ كَشَفَهُ لَأُحْرَقَتْ سُبُحَاتُ
وَجْهِهِ مَا انْتَهَى إِلَيْهِ بَصَرُهُ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ»

(Allah does not sleep, and it does not befit His majesty that He sleeps. He lowers the scales and raises them. The deeds of the day are resurrected in front of Him before the deeds of the night, and the deeds of the night before the deeds of the day. His Veil is light, or fire, and if He removes it, the rays from His Face would burn whatever His sight reaches of His creation.)

4. Allah's statement,

(لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ)

(To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth) indicates that everyone is a servant for Allah, a part of His kingdom and under His power and authority. Similarly, Allah said,

(إِنْ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتِي
الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدًا - لَقَدْ أَحْصَاهُمْ وَعَدَّهُمْ عَدًّا -
وَكُلُّهُمْ عَائِيهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَرْدًا)

(There is none in the heavens and the earth but comes unto the Most Gracious (Allah) as a servant. Verily, He knows each one of them, and has counted them a full counting. And everyone of them will come to Him alone on the Day of Resurrection (without any helper, or protector or defender)) 19:93-95 . 5. Allah's statement,

(مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ)

(Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His permission) is similar to His statements,

(وَكَمْ مِّن مَّلَكٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ لَا تُغْنِي شَفَعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ يَأْذَنَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْضَى
(

(And there are many angels in the heavens, whose intercession will avail nothing except after Allah has given leave for whom He wills and is pleased with) 53:26 , and,

(وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنْ ارْتَضَى)

(They cannot intercede except for him with whom He is pleased) 21:28 .

These Ayat assert Allah's greatness, pride, and grace, and that no one dares to intercede with Him on behalf of anyone else, except by His permission. Indeed, the Hadith about the intercession, states that the Prophet said,

«أَتِي تَحْتَ الْعَرْشِ فَأُخِرُّ سَاجِدًا، فَيَدْعُنِي مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَدْعُنِي. ثُمَّ يُقَالُ: ارْفَعْ رَأْسَكَ، وَقُلْ تُسْمِعْ، وَاشْفَعْ تُشْفَعُ قَالَ: فَيَحُدُّ لِي حِدًّا فَأَدْخِلُهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ»

(I will stand under the Throne and fall in prostration, and Allah will allow me to remain in that position as much as He wills. I will thereafter be told, "Raise your head, speak and you will be heard, intercede and your intercession will be accepted". The Prophet then said, "He will allow me a proportion whom I will enter into Paradise.")

6. Allah's statement ,

(يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ)

(He knows what happens to them (His creatures) in this world, and what will happen to them in the Hereafter) this refers to His perfect knowledge of all creation; its past, present and future. Similarly, Allah said that the angels proclaimed;

(وَمَا نُنزِّلُ إِلَّا بِأَمْرِ رَبِّكَ لَهُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِينَا وَمَا
خَلْفَنَا وَمَا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ نَسِيًّا)

(And we (angels) descend not except by the command of your Lord (O Muhammad). To Him belongs what is before us and what is behind us, and what is between those two; and your Lord is never forgetful) 19:64 . 7. Allah's statement,

(وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ)

(And they will never compass anything of His Knowledge except that which He wills), asserts the fact that no one attains any part of Allah's knowledge except what Allah conveys and allows. This part of the Ayah indicates that no one ever acquires knowledge of Allah and in His Attributes, except what He conveys to them. For instance, Allah said,

(وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِ عِلْمًا)

(But they will never compass anything of His knowledge) 20: 110 . 8. Allah said,

(وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ)

(His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth.)

Waki` narrated in his Tafsir that Ibn `Abbas said, "Kursi is the footstool, and no one is able to give due consideration to Allah's Throne." Al-Hakim recorded this Hadith in his Mustadrak from Ibn `Abbas, who did not relate it to the Prophet . Al-Hakim said, "It is Sahih according to the criteria of the Two Sahih, and they (Al-Bukhari and Muslim) did not record it." In addition, Ad-Dahhak said that Ibn `Abbas said, "If the seven heavens and the seven earths were flattened and laid side by side, they would add up to the size of a ring in a desert, compared to the Kursi." 9. Allah said,

(وَلَا يَؤُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا)

(And He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them) meaning, it does not burden or cause Him fatigue to protect the heavens and earth and all that is in between them. Rather, this is an easy matter for Him. Further, Allah sustains everything, has perfect watch over everything, nothing ever escapes His knowledge and no matter is ever a secret to Him. All matters are insignificant, modest and humble before Him. He is the Most Rich, worthy of all praise. He does what He wills, and no one can ask Him about what He does, while they will be asked. He has supreme power over all things and perfect alertness concerning everything. He is the Most High, the Greatest, there is no deity worthy of worship except Him, and no Lord other than Him.

10. Allah's statement,

(وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ)

(And He is the Most High, the Most Great) is similar to His statement,

(الْكَبِيرُ الْمُتَعَالَى)

(the Most Great, the Most High) 13:9 .

These and similar Ayat and authentic Hadiths about Allah's Attributes must be treated the way the Salaf (righteous ancestors) treated them by accepting their apparent meanings without equating them with the attributes of the creation or altering their apparent meanings.

(لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ
يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنِ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ
بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ
(

(256. There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the right path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in Taghut and believes in Allah, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower.)

No Compulsion in Religion

Allah said,

(لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ)

(There is no compulsion in religion), meaning, "Do not force anyone to become Muslim, for Islam is plain and clear, and its proofs and evidence are plain and clear. Therefore, there is no need to force anyone to embrace Islam. Rather, whoever Allah directs to Islam, opens his heart for it and enlightens his mind, will embrace Islam with certainty. Whoever Allah blinds his heart and seals his hearing and sight, then he will not benefit from being forced to embrace Islam."

It was reported that the Ansar were the reason behind revealing this Ayah, although its indication is general in meaning. Ibn Jarir recorded that Ibn `Abbas said that before Islam , "When (an Ansar) woman would not bear children who would live, she would vow that if she gives birth to a child who remains alive, she would raise him as a Jew. When Banu An-Nadir (the Jewish tribe) were evacuated from Al-Madinah , some of the children of the Ansar were being raised among them, and the Ansar said, `We will not abandon our children.' Allah revealed,

(لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ)

(There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the right path has become distinct from the wrong path.)"

Abu Dawud and An-Nasa'i also recorded this Hadith. As for the Hadith that Imam Ahmad recorded, in which Anas said that the Messenger of Allah said to a man,

«أَسْلِمِ»

قال: إني أجدني كارهًا قال

«وإن كنت كارهًا»

("Embrace Islam." The man said, "I dislike it." The Prophet said, "Even if you dislike it.")

First, this is an authentic Hadith, with only three narrators between Imam Ahmad and the Prophet . However, it is not relevant to the subject under discussion, for the Prophet did not force that man to become Muslim. The Prophet merely invited this man to become Muslim, and he replied that he does not find himself eager to become Muslim. The Prophet said to the man that even though he dislikes embracing Islam, he should still embrace it, `for Allah will grant you sincerity and true intent.'

Tawhid is the Most Trustworthy Handhold

Allah's statement,

(فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ)

(Whoever disbelieves in Taghut and believes in Allah, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower) is in reference to,

"Whoever shuns the rivals of Allah, the idols, and those that Shaytan calls to be worshipped besides Allah, whoever believes in Allah's Oneness, worships Him alone and testifies that there is no deity worthy of worship except Him, then

(فَقَدْ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى)

(then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold.)

Therefore, this person will have acquired firmness in the religion and proceeded on the correct way and the straight path. Abu Al-Qasim Al-Baghawi recorded that `Umar said, "Jibt means magic, and Taghut means Shaytan. Verily, courage and cowardice are two instincts that appear in men, the courageous fights for those whom he does not know and the coward runs away from defending his own mother. Man's honor resides with his religion and his status is based upon his character, even if he was Persian or Nabatian." `Umar's statement that Taghut is Shaytan is very sound, for this meaning includes every type of evil that the ignorant people of Jahiliyyah (pre Islamic era of ignorance) fell into, such as worshipping idols, referring to them for judgement, and invoking them for victory.

Allah's statement,

(فَقَدْ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا)

(then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break) means, "He will have hold of the true religion with the strongest grasp." Allah equated this adherence to the firm handhold that never breaks because it is built solid and because its handle is firmly connected. This is why Allah said here,

(فَقَدْ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا)

(then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break.)

Mujahid said, "The most trustworthy handhold is Iman (faith)." As-Suddi said that it refers to Islam. Imam Ahmad recorded that Qays bin `Abbad said, "I was in the Masjid when a man whose face showed signs of humbleness came and prayed two Rak`ahs that were modest in length. The people said, `This is a man from among the people of Paradise.' When he left, I followed him until he entered his house, and I entered it after him and spoke with him. When he felt at ease, I said to him, `When you entered the Masjid, the people said such and such things.' He said, `All praise is due to Allah! No one should say what he has no knowledge of. I will tell you why they said that. I saw a vision during the time of the Messenger of Allah, and I narrated it to him. I saw that I was in a green garden, ' and he described the garden's plants and spaciousness, ` and there was an iron pole in the middle of the garden affixed in the earth and its tip reached the sky. On its tip, there was a handle, and I was told to ascend the pole. I said, `I cannot.' Then a helper came and raised my robe from behind and said to me, `Ascend.' I ascended until I grasped the handle and he said to me, `Hold on to the handle.' I awoke from that dream with the handle in my hand. I went to the Messenger of Allah and told him about the vision and he said,

«أَمَّا الرَّوْضَةُ فَرَوْضَةُ الْإِسْلَامِ، وَأَمَّا الْعَمُودُ
فَعَمُودُ الْإِسْلَامِ، وَأَمَّا الْعُرْوَةُ فَهِيَ الْعُرْوَةُ الْوُثْقَى،
أَنْتَ عَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ حَتَّى تَمُوتَ»

(As for the garden, it represents Islam; as for the pole, it represents the pillar of Islam; and the handle represents the most trustworthy handhold. You shall remain Muslim until you die.)

This Companion was `Abdullah bin Salam."

This Hadith was also collected in the Two Sahih; and Al-Bukhari also recorded it with another chain of narration.

(اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ
إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَائُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ
يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ أُولَئِكَ
أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ)

(257. Allah is the Wali (Protector or Guardian) of those who believe. He brings them out from darknesses into light. But as for those who disbelieve, their Awliya' (supporters and helpers) are Taghut (false deities and false leaders), they bring them out from light into darknesses. Those are the dwellers of the Fire, and they will abide therein forever.)

Allah stated that whoever follows what pleases Him, He will guide him to the paths of peace, that is Islam, or Paradise. Verily, Allah delivers His believing servants from the darkness of disbelief, doubt and hesitation, to the light of the plain, clear, explained, easy and unequivocal truth. He also stated that Shaytan is the supporter of the disbelievers who beautifies the paths of ignorance and misguidance that they follow, thus causing them to deviate from the true path into disbelief and wickedness.

(أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ)

(Those are the dwellers of the Fire, and they will abide therein forever.)

This is why Allah mentioned the light in the singular while mentioned the darkness in the plural, because truth is one, while disbelief comes as several types, all of which are false. Similarly, Allah said,

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا
السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَن سَبِيلِهِ ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّاكُمْ بِهِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ)

(And verily, this is my straight path, so follow it, and follow not (other) paths, for they will separate you away from His path. This He has ordained for you that you may have Taqwa) 6:153 ,

(وَجَعَلَ الظُّلُمَاتِ وَالنُّورَ)

(And originated the darknesses and the light) 6:1 , and,

(ظِلُّهُ عَنِ الِيمِينِ)

(to the right and to the lefts) 16: 48 .

There are many other Ayat on the subject that mention the truth in the singular and falsehood in the plural, because of falsehood's many divisions and branches.

(أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ آتَاهُ
اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ
قَالَ أَنَا أَحْيِي وَأُمِيتُ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي
بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ
فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ)

(258. Have you not looked at him who disputed with Ibrahim about his Lord (Allah), because Allah had given him the kingdom When Ibrahim said (to him): "My Lord is He Who gives life and causes death." He said, "I give life and cause death." Ibrahim said, "Verily, Allah brings the sun from the east; then bring it you from the west." So the disbeliever was utterly defeated. And Allah guides not the people, who are wrongdoers.)

The Debate Between Ibrahim Al-Khalil and King Nimrod

The king who disputed with Ibrahim was King Nimrod, son of Canaan, son of Kush, son of Sam, son of Noah, as Mujahid stated. It was also said that he was Nimrod, son of Falikh, son of `Abir, son of Shalikh, son of Arfakhshand, son of Sam, son of Noah. Mujahid said, "The kings who ruled the eastern and western parts of the world are four, two believers and two disbelievers. As for the two believing kings, they were Sulayman bin Dawud and Dhul-Qarnayn. As for the two disbelieving kings, they were Nimrod and Nebuchadnezzar." Allah knows best.

Allah said,

(أَلَمْ تَرَ)

(Have you not looked) meaning, "With your heart, O Muhammad!"

(إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ)

(at him who disputed with Ibrahim about his Lord) meaning, about the existence of Allah. Nimrod denied the existence of a god other than himself, as he claimed, just as Fir`awn said later to his people,

(مَا عَلِمْتُ لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرِي)

(I know not that you have a god other than me) 28:38 .

What made Nimrod commit this transgression, utter disbelief and arrant rebellion was his tyranny and the fact that he ruled for a long time. This is why the Ayah continued,

(أَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ)

(Because Allah had given him the kingdom.)

It appears that Nimrod asked Ibrahim to produce proof that Allah exists. Ibrahim replied,

(رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ)

(My Lord is He Who gives life and causes death) meaning, "The proof of Allah's existence is the creations that exist after they were nothing and perish after they had existed. This only proves the existence of the Creator, Who does what He wills, for these things could not have occurred on their own without a Creator who created them, and He is the Lord that I call to for worship, Alone without a partner."

This is when Nimrod said,

(أَنَا أَحْيَى وَأُمِيتُ)

(I give life and cause death.)

Qatadah, Muhammad bin Ishaq and As-Suddi said that he meant, "Two men who deserved execution were to be brought before me, and I would command that one of them be killed, and he would be killed. I would command that the second man be pardoned, and he would be pardoned. This is how I bring life and death." However, it appears that since Nimrod did not deny the existence of a Creator, his statement did not mean what Qatadah said it meant. This explanation does not provide an answer to what Ibrahim said. Nimrod arrogantly and defiantly claimed that he was the creator and pretended that it was he who brings life and death. Later on, Fir`awn imitated him and announced,

(مَا عَلِمْتُ لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلَهِ غَيْرِي)

(I know not that you have a god other than me) 28: 38 .

This is why Ibrahim said to Nimrod,

(فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ)

(Verily, Allah brings the sun from the east; then bring it you from the west.)

This Ayah means, "You claim that it is you who brings life and death. He who brings life and death controls the existence and creates whatever is in it, including controlling its planets and their movements. For instance, the sun rises everyday from the east. Therefore, if you were god, as you claimed, bringing life and death, then bring the sun from the west." Since the king was aware of his weakness, inadequacy and that he was not able to reply to Ibrahim's request, he was idle, silent and unable to comment. Therefore, the proof was established against him. Allah said,

(وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ)

(And Allah guides not the people, who are wrongdoers) meaning, Allah deprives the unjust people of any valid proof or argument. Furthermore, their false proof and arguments are annulled by their Lord, and they have earned His anger and will suffer severe torment.

The meaning that we provided is better than the meaning that some philosophers offered, claiming that Ibrahim used the second argument because it was clearer than the first one. Rather, our explanation asserts that Ibrahim refuted both claims of Nimrod, all praise is due to Allah.

As-Suddi stated that the debate between Ibrahim and Nimrod occurred after Ibrahim was thrown in the fire, for Ibrahim did not meet the king before that day.

(أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّى يُحْيِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتَ مِائَةَ عَامٍ فَانظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ وَانظُرْ إِلَى حِمَارِكَ وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَانظُرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لَحْمًا فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ)

(259. Or like the one who passed by a town in ruin up to its roofs. He said: "How will Allah ever bring it to life after its death" So Allah caused him to die for a hundred years, then raised him up (again). He said: "How long did you remain (dead)" He (the man) said: "(Perhaps) I remained (dead) a day or part of a day." He said: "Nay, you have remained (dead) for a hundred years, look at your food and your drink, they show no change; and look at your donkey! And thus We have made of you a sign for the people. Look at the bones, how We bring them together and clothe them with flesh." When this was clearly shown to him, he said, "I know (now) that Allah is able to do all things.")

The Story of ` Uzayr

Allah's statement ,

(أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ)

(Have you not looked at him who disputed with Ibrahim about his Lord) means, "Have you seen anyone like the person who disputed with Ibrahim about his Lord" Then, Allah connected the Ayah,

(أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا)

(Or like the one who passed by a town in ruin up to its roofs) to the Ayah above by using `or'.

Ibn Abi Hatim recorded that `Ali bin Abi Talib said that the Ayah 2:259 meant `Uzayr. Ibn Jarir also reported it, and this explanation was also reported by Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abi Hatim from Ibn `Abbas, Al-Hasan, Qatadah, As-Suddi and Sulayman bin Buraydah.

Mujahid bin Jabr said that the Ayah refers to a man from the Children of Israel, and the village was Jerusalem, after Nebuchadnezzar destroyed it and killed its people.

(وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ)

(in ruin) means, it became empty of people. Allah's statement,

(عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا)

(up to its roofs) indicates that the roofs and walls (of the village) fell to the ground. `Uzayr stood contemplating about what had happened to that city, after a great civilization used to inhabit it. He said,

(أَتَى يُحْيِ هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا)

(Oh! How will Allah ever bring it to life after its death) because of the utter destruction he saw and the implausibility of its returning to what it used to be. Allah said,

(فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ)

(So Allah caused him to die for a hundred years, then raised him up (again).)

The city was rebuilt seventy years after the man (`Uzayr) died, and its inhabitants increased and the Children of Israel moved back to it. When Allah resurrected `Uzayr after he died, the first organ that He resurrected were his eyes, so that he could witness what Allah does with him, how He brings life back to his body. When his resurrection was complete, Allah said to him, meaning through the angel,

(كَمْ لَبِثْتَ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ)

("How long did you remain (dead)" He (the man) said: "(Perhaps) I remained (dead) a day or part of a day.")

The scholars said that since the man died in the early part of the day and Allah resurrected him in the latter part of the day, when he saw that the sun was still apparent, he thought that it was the sun of that very day. He said,

(أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ فَأَنْظُرُ إِلَى
طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ)

("Or part of a day. " He said: "Nay, you have remained (dead) for a hundred years, look at your food and your drink, they show no change.")

He had grapes, figs and juice, and he found them as he left them; neither did the juice spoil nor the figs become bitter nor the grapes rot.

(وَأَنْظُرُ إِلَى حِمَارِكَ)

(And look at your donkey!), "How Allah brings it back to life while you are watching."

(وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ)

(And thus We have made of you a sign for the people) that Resurrection occurs.

(وَأَنْظُرُ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنْشِرُهَا)

(Look at the bones, how We Nunshizuha) meaning, collect them and put them back together. In his Mustadrak, Al-Hakim, recorded that Kharijah bin Zayd bin Thabit said that his father said that the Messenger of Allah read this Ayah,

(كَيْفَ نُنْشِرُهَا)

(how We Nunshizuha.) Al-Hakim said; "Its chain is Sahih and they (Al-Bukhari and Muslim) did not record it." The Ayah was also read,

()

"Nunshiruha" meaning, bring them back to life, as Mujahid stated.

(ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لَحْمًا)

(And clothe them with flesh.)

As-Suddi said, " Uzayr observed the bones of his donkey, which were scattered all around him to his right and left, and Allah sent a wind that collected the bones from all over the area. Allah then brought every bone to its place, until they formed a full donkey made of fleshless bones. Allah then covered these bones with flesh, nerves, veins and skin. Allah sent an angel who blew life in the donkeys' nostrils, and the donkey started to bray by Allah's leave." All this occurred while Uzayr was watching, and this is when he proclaimed,

(قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ)

(He said, "I know (now) that Allah is able to do all things,") meaning, "I know that, and I did witness it with my own eyes. Therefore, I am the most knowledgeable in this matter among the people of my time."

(وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ
قَالَ أَوْلَمْ تُؤْمِنِ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي قَالَ
فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ
سَعْيًا وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ)

(260. And (remember) when Ibrahim said, "My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead." He (Allah) said: "Do you not believe" He (Ibrahim) said: "Yes (I believe), but to be stronger in faith." He said: "Take four birds, then cause them to incline towards you (then slaughter them, cut them into pieces), and then put a portion of them on every hill, and call them, they will come to you in haste. And know that Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.")

The Khalil Supplicates to Allah to Show Him How He Resurrects the Dead

The scholars said that there are reasons behind this request by Ibrahim. For instance, when Ibrahim said to Nimrod,

(رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ)

(My Lord (Allah) is He Who gives life and causes death,) he wanted to solidify his knowledge about resurrection by actually witnessing it with his eyes. Prophet Ibrahim said,

(رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى قَالَ أَوْلَمْ تُؤْمِنِ
قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي)

("My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead." He (Allah) said: "Do you not believe" He (Ibrahim) said: "Yes (I believe), but to be stronger in faith.")

Al-Bukhari recorded that Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allah said,

«نَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالشَّكِّ مِنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِذْ قَالَ
(رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى قَالَ أَوْلَمْ تُؤْمِنِ
قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي)

(We are more liable to be in doubt than Ibrahim when he said, "My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead." Allah said, "Don't you believe" Ibrahim said, "Yes (I believe), but (I ask) in order to be stronger in faith.")

The Prophet's statement in the Hadith means, "We are more liable to seek certainty."

The Answer to Al-Khalil's Request

Allah said,

(قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ)

(He said: "Take four birds, then cause them to incline towards you.")

Scholars of Tafsir disagreed over the type of birds mentioned here, although this matter is not relevant due to the fact that the Qur'an did not mention it. Allah's statement,

(فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ)

(cause them to incline towards you) means, cut them to pieces. This is the explanation of Ibn `Abbas, `Ikrimah, Sa`id bin Jubayr, Abu Malik, Abu Al-Aswad Ad-Dili, Wahb bin Munabbih, Al-Hasan and As-Suddi. Therefore, Ibrahim caught four birds, slaughtered them, removed the

feathers, tore the birds to pieces and mixed the pieces together. He then placed parts of these mixed pieces on four or seven hills. Ibn ` Abbas said, "Ibrahim kept the heads of these birds in his hand. Next, Allah commanded Ibrahim to call the birds to him, and he did as Allah commanded him. Ibrahim witnessed the feathers, blood and flesh of these birds fly to each other, and the parts flew each to their bodies, until every bird came back to life and came walking at a fast pace towards Ibrahim, so that the example that Ibrahim was witnessing would become more impressive. Each bird came to collect its head from Ibrahim's hand, and if he gave the bird another head the bird refused to accept it. When Ibrahim gave each bird its own head, the head was placed on its body by Allah's leave and power. " This is why Allah said,

(وَاعْلَمَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ)

(And know that Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise) and no one can overwhelm or resist Him. Whatever Allah wills, occurs without hindrance, because He is the All-Mighty, Supreme above all things, and He is Wise in His statements, actions, legislation and decrees.

` Abdur-Razzaq recorded that Ma` mar said that Ayyub said that Ibn ` Abbas commented on what Ibrahim said,

(وَلَكِنْ لِيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي)

(but to be stronger in Faith), "To me, there is no Ayah in the Qur'an that brings more hope than this Ayah." Ibn Abi Hatim recorded that Muhammad bin Al-Munkadir said that ` Abdullah bin ` Abbas met ` Abdullah bin ` Amr bin Al-` As and said to him, "Which Ayah in the Qur'an carries more hope for you" Ibn ` Amr said,

(قُلْ يَاعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا)

(Say: "O ` Ibadi (My servants) who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not.) 39:53 .

Ibn ` Abbas said, "But I say that it is Allah's statement,

(وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ قَالَ أُولَٰئِكَ ثَوَمِنَ قَالَ بَلَىٰ)

(And (remember) when Ibrahim said, "My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead." He (Allah) said: "Do you not believe" He (Ibrahim) said: "Yes (I believe)...)

Allah accepted Ibrahim's affirmation when he merely said, `Yes.' This Ayah refers to the doubts that attack the heart and the thoughts that Shaytan inspires." Al-Hakim also recorded this in Al-Mustadrak and said; "Its chain is Sahih but they did not record it."

(مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنبُلَةٍ مِائَةٌ حَبَّةٌ وَاللَّهُ يُضَعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَسِعَ عَلِيمٌ)

(261. The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah, is that of a grain (of corn); it grows seven ears, and each ear has a hundred grains. Allah gives manifold increase to whom He wills. And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower.)

Rewards of Spending in Allah's Cause

This is a parable that Allah made of the multiplication of rewards for those who spend in His cause, seeking His pleasure. Allah multiplies the good deed ten to seven hundred times. Allah said,

(مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ)

(The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah...)

Sa`id bin Jubayr commented, "Meaning spending in Allah's obedience." Makhul said that the Ayah means, "Spending on Jihad, on horse stalls, weapons and so forth." The parable in the Ayah is more impressive on the heart than merely mentioning the number seven hundred. This Ayah indicates that Allah `grows' the good deeds for its doers, just as He grows the plant for whoever sows it in fertile land. The Sunnah also mentions that the deeds are multiplied up to seven hundred folds. For instance, Imam Ahmad recorded that Abu Mas`ud said that a man once gave away a camel, with its bridle on, in the cause of Allah and the Messenger of Allah said,

«لَتَأْتِينَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِسَبْعِمِائَةِ نَاقَةٍ مَخْطُومَةٍ»

(On the Day of Resurrection, you will have seven hundred camels with their bridles.)

Muslim and An-Nasa'i also recorded this Hadith, and Muslim's narration reads, "A man brought a camel with its bridle on and said, `O Messenger of Allah! This is in the sake of Allah.' The Messenger said,

«لَكَ بِهَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ سَبْعِمِائَةِ نَاقَةٍ»

(You will earn seven hundred camels as reward for it on the Day of Resurrection.)

Another Hadith: Ahmad recorded that Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allah said,

«كُلُّ عَمَلٍ ابْنِ آدَمَ يُضَاعَفُ، الْحَسَنَةُ بِعَشْرِ أَمْثَالِهَا، إِلَى سَبْعِمِائَةٍ ضِعْفٍ، إِلَى مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ، يَقُولُ اللَّهُ: إِلَّا الصَّوْمَ فَإِنَّهُ لِي، وَأَنَا أَجْزِي بِهِ، يَدَعُ طَعَامَهُ وَشَهْوَتَهُ مِنْ أَجْلِي، وَاللصَّائِمِ فَرْحَتَانِ: فَرْحَةٌ عِنْدَ فِطْرِهِ وَفَرْحَةٌ عِنْدَ لِقَاءِ رَبِّهِ، وَلِخَلُوفٍ فَمِ الصَّائِمِ أَطْيَبُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ رِيحِ الْمِسْكِ، الصَّوْمُ جُنَّةٌ، الصَّوْمُ جُنَّةٌ»

(Every good deed that the son of Adam performs will be multiplied ten folds, to seven hundred folds, to many other folds, to as much as Allah wills. Allah said, "Except the fast, for it is for Me and I will reward for it. One abandons his food and desire in My sake." The fasting person has two times of happiness: when he breaks his fast and when he meets his Lord. Verily, the odor that comes from the mouth of whoever fasts is more pure to Allah than the scent of musk. Fasting is a shield (against sinning), fasting is a shield.) Muslim recorded this Hadith.

Allah's statement,

(وَاللَّهُ يُضَاعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ)

(Allah gives manifold increase to whom He wills) is according to the person's sincerity in his deeds.

(وَاللَّهُ وَسِعَ عَلِيمٌ)

(And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower) meaning, His Favor is so wide that it encompasses much more than His creation, and He has full knowledge in whoever deserves it, or does not deserve it. All the praise and thanks are due to Allah.

(الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتَّبِعُونَ
مَا أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلَا أَدَىٰ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ
وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتَّبِعَهَا أَدَىٰ وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ
حَلِيمٌ يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَتِكُمْ
بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَدَىٰ كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا
يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ
عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ صَلْدًا لَا
يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي
الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ)

(262. Those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah, and do not follow up their gifts with reminders of their generosity or with injury, their reward is with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.) (263. Kind words and forgiving of faults are better than Sadaqah (charity) followed by injury. And Allah is Rich (free of all needs) and He is Most Forbearing.) (264. O you who believe! Do not render in vain your Sadaqah (charity) by reminders of your generosity or by injury, like him who spends his wealth to be seen of men, and he does not believe in Allah, nor in the Last Day. His likeness is the likeness of a smooth rock on which is a little dust; on it falls heavy rain which leaves it bare. They are not able to do anything with what they have earned. And Allah does not guide the disbelieving people.)

To Remind About Charity Given is Forbidden

Allah praises those who spend from their money in His cause, and then refrain from reminding those who received the charity of that fact, whether these hints take the form of words or actions.

Allah's statement,

(وَلَا أَدَىٰ)

(or with injury), indicates that they do not cause harm to those whom they gave the charity to, for this harm will only annul the charity. Allah next promised them the best rewards for this good deed,

(لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ)

(their reward is with their Lord), indicating that Allah Himself will reward them for these righteous actions. Further,

(وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ)

(On them shall be no fear) regarding the horrors of the Day of Resurrection,

(وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ)

(nor shall they grieve) regarding the offspring that they leave behind and the adornment and delights of this world. They will not feel sorry for this, because they will acquire what is far better for them.

Allah then said,

(قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ)

(Kind words) meaning, compassionate words and a supplication for Muslims,

(وَمَغْفِرَةٌ)

(and forgiving) meaning, forgiving an injustice that took the form of actions or words,

(خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتْبَعُهَا أَذَى)

(are better than Sadaqah (charity) followed by injury.)

(وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ)

(And Allah is Rich) not needing His creation,

(حَلِيمٌ)

(Most Forbearing) forgives, releases and pardons them.

There are several Hadiths that prohibit reminding people of acts of charity. For instance, Muslim recorded that Abu Dharr said that the Messenger of Allah said,

«ثَلَاثَةٌ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَلَا يَنْظُرُ
إِلَيْهِمْ، وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ، وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ: الْمَنَانُ بِمَا
أَعْطَى، وَالْمُسْبِلُ إِزَارَهُ، وَالْمُنْفِقُ سِلْعَتَهُ بِالْحَلْفِ
الْكَاذِبِ»

(Three persons whom Allah shall neither speak to on the Day of Resurrection nor look at nor purify, and they shall receive a painful torment: he who reminds (the people) of what he gives away, he who lengthens his clothes below the ankles and he who swears an oath while lying, to sell his merchandise.)

This is why Allah said,

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ
وَالْأَذَى)

(O you who believe! Do not render in vain your Sadaqah (charity) by reminders of your generosity or by injury) stating that the charity will be rendered in vain if it is followed by harm or reminders. In this case, the reward of giving away charity is not sufficient enough to nullify the harm and reminders. Allah then said,

(كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ)

(like him who spends his wealth to be seen of men) meaning, "Do not nullify your acts of charity by following them with reminders and harm, just like the charity of those who give it to show off to people." The boasting person pretends to give away charity for Allah's sake, but in reality seeks to gain people's praise and the reputation of being kind or generous, or other material gains of this life. All the while, he does not think about Allah or gaining His pleasure and generous rewards, and this is why Allah said,

(وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ)

(and he does not believe in Allah, nor in the Last Day.)

Allah next set the example of whoever gives charity to show off. Ad-Dahhak commented that the example fits one who follows his acts of charity with reminders or harm. Allah said,

(فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانَ)

(His likeness is the likeness of Safwan) where Safwan, from is Safwanah, meaning 'the smooth rocks,'

(عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَاَصَابَهُ وَاَيْلٌ)

(on which is little dust; on it falls a Wabil) meaning, heavy rain,

(فَتَرَكَهُ صَلْدًا)

(which leaves it bare.) This Ayah means that heavy rain left the Safwan completely barren of dust. Such is the case with Allah's action regarding the work of those who show off, as their deeds are bound to vanish and disappear, even though people think that these deeds are as plentiful as specks of dust. So Allah said,

(لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ)

(They are not able to do anything with what they have earned. And Allah does not guide the disbelieving people.)

(وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ
وَتَنْبِيئًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ جَنَّةٍ بِرَبْوَةٍ أَصَابَهَا
وَاَيْلٌ فَأَتَتْ أَخْلَهَا ضِعْفَيْنِ فَإِن لَّمْ يُصِبْهَا وَاَيْلٌ
فَطُلٌّ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ)

(265. And the parable of those who spend their wealth seeking Allah's pleasure while they in their own selves are sure and certain that Allah will reward them (for their spending in His cause), is that of a garden on a height; heavy rain falls on it and it doubles its yield of harvest. And if it does not receive heavy rain, light rain suffices it. And Allah is All-Seer (knows well) of what you do.) This is the example of the believers who give away charity seeking only Allah's pleasure,

(وَتَثْبِيئًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ)

(while they in their own selves are sure and certain) meaning, they are certain that Allah shall reward them for these righteous acts with the best rewards. Similarly, in a Hadith collected by Al-Bukhari and Muslim, the Messenger of Allah said,

«مَنْ صَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا»

(Whoever fasts Ramadan with faith and expectation...) meaning, believing that Allah commanded the fast, all the while awaiting His reward for fasting it.

Allah's statement,

(كَمَثَلِ جَنَّةٍ بِرَبْوَةٍ)

(is that of a garden on a Rabwah) means, the example of a garden on 'a height above the ground', as the majority of scholars have stated. Ibn `Abbas and Ad-Dahhak added that it also has flowing rivers.

Allah's statement,

(أَصَابَهَا وَايْلٌ)

(Wabil falls on it) means, heavy rain as we stated, So it produces its,

(أَكْلَهَا)

(yield of harvest) meaning, fruits or produce,

(ضِعْفَيْنِ)

(doubles), as compared to other gardens.

(فَإِنْ لَمْ يُصِْبْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطَلٌّ)

(And if it does not receive Wabil, a Tall suffices it.)

Ad-Dahhak said that the `Tall' is light rain. The Ayah indicates that the garden on the Rabwah is always fertile, for if heavy rain does not fall on it, light rain will suffice for it. Such is the case regarding the believer's good deeds, for they never become barren. Rather, Allah accepts the believer's righteous deeds and increases them, each according to his deeds. This is why Allah said next,

(وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ)

(And Allah is All-Seer of what you do) meaning, none of His servants' deeds ever escapes His perfect watch.

(أَيُّودٌ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ
وَأَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ ذُرِّيَّةٌ ضُعَفَاءُ فَأَصَابَهَا
إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ فَاحْتَرَقَتْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ
الآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ)

(266. Would any of you wish to have a garden with date palms and vines, with rivers flowing underneath, and all kinds of fruits for him therein, while he is stricken with old age, and his children are weak (not able to look after themselves), then it is struck with a fiery whirlwind, so that it is burnt Thus does Allah make clear His Ayat to you that you may give thought.)

The Example of Evil Deeds Nullifying Good Deeds

Al-Bukhari recorded that Ibn `Abbas and `Ubayd bin `Umayr said that `Umar bin Al-Khattab asked the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, "According to your opinion, about whom was this Ayah revealed,

(أَيُّودٌ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ
وَأَعْنَابٍ)

(Would any of you wish to have a garden with date palms and vines...).

They said, "Allah knows best." `Umar became angry and said, "Say we know or we do not know." Ibn `Abbas said, "O Leader of the Faithful! I have an opinion about it." `Umar said, "O my nephew! Say your opinion and do not belittle yourself." Ibn `Abbas said, "This is an example set for a deed." `Umar said, "What type of deed" Ibn `Abbas said, "For a wealthy man who works in Allah's pleasure and then Allah sends Shaytan to him, and he works in disobedience, until he annuls his good works."

This Hadith suffices as an explanation for the Ayah, for it explains the example it sets by a person who does good first and then follows it with evil, may Allah save us from this end. So, this man annulled his previous good works with his latter evil works. When he desperately needed the deeds of the former type, there were none. This is why Allah said,

وَأَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ ذُرِّيَّةٌ ضِعْفَاءُ فَأَصَابَهَا
إِعْصَارٌ

(while he is stricken with old age, and his children are weak (not able to look after themselves), then it is struck with a whirlwind) with heavy wind,

(فِيهِ نَارٌ فَاحْتَرَقَتْ)

(that is fiery, so that it is burnt) meaning, its fruits were burnt and its trees were destroyed. Therefore, what will his condition be like

Ibn Abi Hatim recorded that Al-`Awfi said that Ibn `Abbas said, "Allah has set a good parable, and all His parables are good. He said,

(أَيُّودٌ أَحَدَكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ
الثَّمَرَاتِ)

(Would any of you wish to have a garden with date palms and vines, with rivers flowing underneath, and all kinds of fruits for him therein.)

But he lost all this in his old age,

(وَأَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ)

(while he is stricken with old age) while his offspring and children are weak just before the end of his life. Then a lightning storm came and destroyed his garden. Then he did not have the strength to grow another garden, nor did his offspring offer enough help. This is the condition of the disbeliever on the Day of Resurrection when he returns to Allah, for he will not have any good deeds to provide an excuse - or refuge - for him, just as the man in the parable had no strength to replant the garden. The disbeliever will not find anything to resort to for help, just as the offspring of the man in the parable did not provide him with help. So he will be deprived of his reward when he most needs it, just as the man in the parable was deprived of Allah's garden when he most needed it, when he became old and his offspring weak."

In his Mustadrak, Al-Hakim recorded that the Messenger of Allah used to say in his supplication,

«اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ أَوْسَعَ رِزْقِكَ عَلَيَّ عِنْدَ كِبَرِ سِنِّي
وَإِنْقِضَاءِ عُمُرِي»

(O Allah! Make Your biggest provision for me when I am old in age and at the time my life ends.)

This is why Allah said,

كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ

(Thus Allah makes clear to you His Laws in order that you may give thought) meaning, comprehend and understand the parables and their intended implications. Similarly, Allah said,

وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا
الْعَالِمُونَ

(And these similitudes We put forward for mankind; but none will understand them except those who have knowledge (of Allah and His signs)) 29:43 .

يَأْيُهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنفِقُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ
وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا
الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ بِأَخْذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ
تُعْمِضُوا فِيهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ

الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُم بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ
يَعِدُكُم مَّغْفِرَةً مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلًا وَاللَّهُ وَسِعَ عَلِيمٌ

(يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ
أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ)

(267. O you who believe! Spend of the good things which you have (legally) earned, and of that which We have produced from the earth for you, and do not aim at that which is bad to spend from it, (though) you would not accept it save if you close your eyes and tolerate therein. And know that Allah is Rich (free of all needs), and worthy of all praise.) (268. Shaytan threatens you with poverty and orders you to commit Fahsha' (evil deeds) whereas Allah promises you forgiveness from Himself and bounty, and Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower.) (269. He grants Hikmah to whom He wills, and he, to whom Hikmah is granted, is indeed granted abundant good. But none remember (will receive admonition) except men of understanding.)

The Encouragement to Spend Honest Money for Allah's Sake

Allah commands His believing servants to spend in charity, as Ibn ` Abbas stated, from the pure, honest money that they earned and from the fruits and vegetables that He has grown for them in the land. Ibn ` Abbas said, "Allah commanded them to spend from the purest, finest and best types of their money and prohibited spending from evil and dishonest money, because Allah is pure and good and only accepts that which is pure and good." This is why Allah said,

(وَلَا تَيْمَمُوا الْخَبِيثَ)

(and do not aim at that which is bad) meaning, filthy (impure) money,

(مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ بِأَخَذِيهِ)

(to spend from it, (though) you would not accept it) meaning, "If you were given this type, you would not take it, except if you tolerate the deficiency in it. Verily, Allah is far Richer than you, He is in no need of this money, so do not give, for His sake, what you would dislike for yourselves." It was reported that,

(وَلَا تَيْمَمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ)

(and do not aim at that which is bad to spend from it) means, "Do not spend from the dishonest, impure money instead of the honest, pure money."

Ibn Jarir recorded that Al-Bara' bin `Azib commented on Allah's statement,

(يَأْيُهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ
وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا
الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ)

(O you who believe! Spend of the good things which you have (legally) earned, and of that which We have produced from the earth for you, and do not aim at that which is bad to spend from it,) that it was revealed about the Ansar. When the season for harvesting date-trees would start, the Ansar would collect ripe-date branches from their gardens and hang them on a rope erected between two pillars in the Masjid of the Messenger of Allah. The poor emigrant Companions would eat from these dates. However, some of them (Ansar) would also add lesser type of dates in between ripe-date branches, thinking they are allowed to do so. Allah revealed this Ayah about those who did this,

(وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ)

(and do not aim at that which is bad to spend from it.)

`Ali bin Abi Talhah said that Ibn `Abbas commented on the Ayah,

(وَلَسْتُمْ بِأَخْذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ)

(you would not accept it save if you close your eyes and tolerate therein) means, "If you had a right on someone who would pay you less than what you gave them, you would not agree until you require more from them to make up the difference. This is why Allah said,

(إِلَّا أَنْ تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ)

(save if you close your eyes and tolerate therein) meaning, `How do you agree for Me what you do not agree for yourselves, while I have a right to the best and most precious of your possessions" Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn Jarir recorded this Hadith and Ibn Jarir added, "And this is the meaning of Allah's statement,

(لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ)

(By no means shall you attain Al-Birr, unless you spend of that which you love)" 4:92

Allah said next,

(وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ)

(And know that Allah is Rich (free of all needs), and worthy of all praise) meaning, "Although Allah commanded you to give away the purest of your money in charity, He is far Richer from needing your charity, but the purpose is that the distance between the rich and the poor becomes less." Similarly, Allah said,

(لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهَ لُحُومُهَا وَلَا دِمَاؤُهَا وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُهُ
التَّقْوَى مِنْكُمْ)

(It is neither their meat nor their blood that reaches Allah, but it is piety from you that reaches Him) 22:37 .

Allah is Rich and free of needing anything from any of His creatures, while all of His creatures stand in need of Him. Allah's bounty encompassing, and what He has never ends. Therefore, whoever gives away good and pure things in charity, let him know that Allah is the Most Rich, His favor is enormous and He is Most Generous, Most Compassionate; and He shall reward him for his charity and multiply it many times. So who would lend to He Who is neither poor nor unjust, Who is worthy of all praise in all His actions, statements, and decisions, of Whom there is neither a deity worthy of worship except Him, nor a Lord other than Him

Shaytan's Doubts Concerning Spending in Charity

Allah said,

(الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ
يَعِدُكُمْ مَغْفِرَةً مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلًا وَاللَّهُ وَسِعَ عَلِيمٌ)

(Shaytan threatens you with poverty and orders you to commit Fahsha'; whereas Allah promises you forgiveness from Himself and bounty, and Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower.)

Ibn Abi Hatim recorded that `Abdullah bin Mas`ud said that the Messenger of Allah said,

«إِنَّ لِلشَّيْطَانِ لَمَّةً بِابْنِ آدَمَ، وَلِلْمَلَكِ لَمَّةً، فَأَمَّا لَمَّةُ الشَّيْطَانِ فَأَيْعَادُ بِالشَّرِّ، وَتَكْذِيبُ بِالْحَقِّ، وَأَمَّا لَمَّةُ الْمَلَكِ فَأَيْعَادُ بِالْخَيْرِ، وَتَصْدِيقُ بِالْحَقِّ، فَمَنْ وَجَدَ ذَلِكَ فَلْيَعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ، فَلْيَحْمَدِ اللَّهَ، وَمَنْ وَجَدَ الْآخَرَ فَلْيَتَعَوَّذْ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ»

(Shaytan has an effect on the son of Adam, and the angel also has an effect. As for the effect of Shaytan, it is by his threatening with evil repercussions and rejecting the truth. As for the effect of the angel, it is by his promise of a good end and believing in the truth. Whoever finds the latter, let him know that it is coming from Allah and let him thank Allah for it. Whoever finds the former, let him seek refuge - with Allah - from Shaytan.)

The Prophet then recited,

(الشَّيْطَانُ يَعْذُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْذُكُمُ مَغْفِرَةً مِنْهُ وَقَضَاءً)

(Shaytan threatens you with poverty and orders you to commit Fahsha'; whereas Allah promises you forgiveness from Himself and bounty)

This is the narration that At-Tirmidhi and An-Nasa'i collected in the book of Tafsir in their Sunan collections. Allah said,

(الشَّيْطَانُ يَعْذُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ)

(Shaytan threatens you with poverty), so that you hold on to whatever you have and refrain from spending it in Allah's pleasure.

(وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ)

(And orders you to commit Fahsha'), meaning, "Shaytan forbids you from spending in charity because of the false fear of becoming poor, and he encourages evil deeds, sins, indulging in what is prohibited, and immoral conduct." Allah said,

(وَاللَّهُ يَعِدُكُمْ مَغْفِرَةً مِّنْهُ)

(Whereas Allah promises you forgiveness from Himself) instead of the evil that Shaytan enjoins on you,

(وَفَضْلًا)

(And Bounty) as opposed to the poverty that Shaytan frightens you with,

(وَاللَّهُ وَسِعَ عَلِيمٌ)

(And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower.)

The Meaning of Al-Hikmah

Allah said,

(يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ)

(He grants Hikmah to whom He wills.)

`Ali bin Abi Talhah reported that Ibn `Abbas said, "That is knowledge of the Qur'an. For instance, the abrogating and the abrogated, what is plain and clear and what is not as plain and clear, what it allows, and what it does not allow, and its parables." Imam Ahmad recorded that Ibn Mas`ud said that he heard the Messenger of Allah saying,

«لَا حَسَدَ إِلَّا فِي اثْنَتَيْنِ: رَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ مَالًا
فَسَلَّطَهُ عَلَىٰ هَلَكَاتِهِ فِي الْحَقِّ، وَرَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ
حِكْمَةً فَهُوَ يَقْضِي بِهَا وَيُعَلِّمُهَا»

(There is no envy except in two instances: a person whom Allah has endowed with wealth and he spends it righteously, and a person whom Allah has given Hikmah and he judges by it and teaches it to others.)

This was also collected by Al-Bukhari, Muslim, An-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah.

Allah's statement,

(وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ)

(But none remember (will receive admonition) except men of understanding.) means, "Those who will benefit from the advice are those who have sound minds and good comprehension with which they understand the words (of advice and reminder) and their implications."

(وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِّنْ نَّفَقَةٍ أَوْ نَذَرْتُمْ مِّنْ نَّذْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُهُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ - إِنْ تُبْدُوا الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِيَ وَإِنْ تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا الْفُقَرَاءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَيُكَفِّرُ عَنْكُمْ مِّنْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ)

(270. And whatever you spend for spendings (e.g., in Sadaqah) or whatever vow you make, be sure Allah knows it all. And for the wrongdoers there are no helpers.) (271. If you disclose your Sadaqat (almsgiving), it is well; but if you conceal them and give them to the poor, that is better for you. (Allah) will expiate you some of your sins. And Allah is Well-Acquainted with what you do.)

Allah states that He has perfect knowledge of the good deeds performed by all of His creation, such as charity and various vows, and He rewards tremendously for these deeds, provided they are performed seeking His Face and His promise. Allah also warns those who do not work in his obedience, but instead disobey His command, reject His revelation and worship others besides Him:

(وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ)

(And for the wrongdoers there are no helpers.) meaning, who will save them from Allah's anger and torment on the Day of Resurrection.

The Virtue of Disclosing or Concealing Charity

Allah said,

(إِنْ تُبْدُوا الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِيَ)

(If you disclose your Sadaqat, it is well) meaning, "It is well if you make known the charity that you give away."

Allah's statement,

(وَإِنْ تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا الْفُقَرَاءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ)

(But if you conceal them and give them to the poor, that is better for you.) this indicates that concealing charity is better than disclosing it, because it protects one from showing off and boasting. However, if there is an apparent wisdom behind disclosing the charity, such as the people imitating this righteous act, then disclosing it becomes better than concealing it. The Messenger of Allah said,

«الْجَاهِرُ بِالْقُرْآنِ كَالْجَاهِرِ بِالصَّدَقَةِ، وَالْمُسِرُّ بِالْقُرْآنِ كَالْمُسِرِّ بِالصَّدَقَةِ»

(He who utters aloud Qur'anic recitation is just like he who discloses charity acts. He who conceals Qur'anic recitation is just like he who conceals charity acts.)

The Ayah indicates that it is better that acts of charity be concealed, as reiterated by the Hadith that the Two Sahih recorded from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah said,

«سَبْعَةٌ يُظِلُّهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي ظِلِّهِ يَوْمَ لَا ظِلَّ إِلَّا ظِلُّهُ: إِمَامٌ عَادِلٌ، وَشَابٌّ نَشَأَ فِي عِبَادَةِ اللَّهِ، وَرَجُلَانِ تَحَابَّا فِي اللَّهِ، اجْتَمَعَا عَلَيْهِ وَتَفَرَّقَا عَلَيْهِ، وَرَجُلٌ قَلْبُهُ مُعَلَّقٌ بِالْمَسْجِدِ، إِذَا خَرَجَ مِنْهُ حَتَّى يَرْجِعَ إِلَيْهِ، وَرَجُلٌ ذَكَرَ اللَّهَ خَالِيًا فَفَاضَتْ عَيْنَاهُ، وَرَجُلٌ دَعَتْهُ امْرَأَةٌ ذَاتُ مَنْصِبٍ وَجَمَالٍ، فَقَالَ: إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَرَجُلٌ تَصَدَّقَ

بِصَدَقَةٍ فَأَخْفَاهَا، حَتَّىٰ لَا تَعْلَمَ شِمَالُهُ مَا تُنْفِقُ
يَمِينُهُ»

(Allah will give shade to seven on the Day when there will be no shade but His. (They are:) a just ruler, a youth who has been brought up in the worship of Allah, two persons who love each other only for Allah's sake who meet and part in Allah's cause only, a man whose heart is attached to the Masjid from the time he departs the Masjid until he returns to it, a person who remembers Allah in seclusion and his eyes are then flooded with tears, a man who refuses the call of a charming woman of noble birth for illicit intercourse with her and says, 'I fear Allah, Lord of the worlds', and a man who gives charitable gifts so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand has given.)

Allah's statement,

(وَيُكَفِّرُ عَنْكُمْ مِّنْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ)

((Allah) will expiate you some of your sins) means, in return for giving away charity, especially if it was concealed. Therefore, you will gain goodness by your rank being raised, and your sins being forgiven.

Allah's statement,

(وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ)

(And Allah is Well-Acquainted with what you do) means, "No good deed that you perform escapes His knowledge, and He shall reward for it."

(لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَأَنفُسِكُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا
ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُؤَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ
وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظَلَمُونَ - لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَحْصَرُوا فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ
يَحْسِبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ تَعْرِفُهُمْ

بِسِيمِهِمْ لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِحْقَاقًا وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ
خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ - الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ
بِالْأَيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ
رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ)

(272. Not upon you (Muhammad) is their guidance, but Allah guides whom He wills. And whatever you spend in good, it is for yourselves, when you spend not except seeking Allah's Face. And whatever you spend in good, it will be repaid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged.) (273. (Charity is) for Fuqara' (the poor), who in Allah's cause are restricted (from travel), and cannot move about in the land (for trade or work). The one who knows them not, thinks that they are rich because of their modesty. You may know them by their mark, they do not beg of people at all. And whatever you spend in good, surely Allah knows it well.) (274. Those who spend their wealth (in Allah's cause) by night and day, in secret and in public, they shall have their reward with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.)

Giving Charity to Polytheists

Abu `Abdur-Rahman An-Nasa'i recorded that Ibn `Abbas said that they, "Disliked giving charity to their polytheist relatives, but were later on allowed to give it to them when they inquired about this matter, and this Ayah was revealed,

(لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا
ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُوفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ
وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ)

(Not upon you (Muhammad) is their guidance, but Allah guides whom He wills. And whatever you spend in good, it is for yourselves, when you spend not except seeking Allah's Face. And whatever you spend in good, it will be repaid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged.)

Allah's statement,

(وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَأَنْفُسِكُمْ)

(And whatever you spend in good, it is for yourselves) is similar to His other statement,

(مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ)

(Whosoever does righteous good deed, it is for (the benefit of) his ownself.)

There are many other similar Ayat in the Qur'an.

Allah said next,

(وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ)

(When you spend not except seeking Allah's Face.)

Al-Hasan Al-Basri commented, "Whenever the believer spends, including what he spends on himself, he seeks Allah's Face with it." `Ata' Al-Khurasani said that the Ayah means, "You give away charity for the sake of Allah. Therefore, you will not be asked about the deeds or wickedness of those who receive it." This is a sound meaning indicating that when one spends in charity for Allah's sake, then his reward will be with Allah. He will not be asked if the charity unintentionally reached righteous, evil, deserving or undeserving persons, for he will be rewarded for his good intention. The proof to this statement is the Ayah,

(وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُوفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ)

(And whatever you spend in good, it will be repaid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged.)

The Two Sahihs recorded a Hadith by Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah said,

«قَالَ رَجُلٌ: لَأَتَصَدَّقَنَّ اللَّيْلَةَ بِصَدَقَةٍ، فَخَرَجَ بِصَدَقَتِهِ فَوَضَعَهَا فِي يَدِ زَانِيَةٍ، فَأَصْبَحَ النَّاسُ يَتَحَدَّثُونَ: نُصَدِّقَ عَلَى زَانِيَةٍ، فَقَالَ: اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ عَلَى زَانِيَةٍ، لَأَتَصَدَّقَنَّ اللَّيْلَةَ بِصَدَقَةٍ، فَخَرَجَ بِصَدَقَتِهِ فَوَضَعَهَا فِي يَدِ غَنِيٍّ، فَأَصْبَحُوا

يَتَحَدَّثُونَ: نُصَدِّقَ اللَّيْلَةَ عَلَى غَنِيِّ، قَالَ: اللَّهُمَّ
لَكَ الْحَمْدُ عَلَى غَنِيِّ، لَأَتَصَدَّقَنَّ اللَّيْلَةَ بِصَدَقَةٍ،
فَخَرَجَ بِصَدَقَتِهِ فَوَضَعَهَا فِي يَدِ سَارِقٍ،
فَأَصْبَحُوا يَتَحَدَّثُونَ: نُصَدِّقَ اللَّيْلَةَ عَلَى سَارِقٍ،
فَقَالَ: اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ عَلَى زَانِيَةٍ، وَعَلَى غَنِيِّ،
وَعَلَى سَارِقٍ. فَأْتِيَ فَقِيلَ لَهُ: أَمَا صَدَقْتُكَ فَقَدْ
قُبِلَتْ، وَأَمَا الزَّانِيَةُ فَلَعَلَّهَا أَنْ تَسْتَعِفَّ بِهَا عَنْ
زَنَاهَا، وَلَعَلَّ الْغَنِيَّ يَعْتَبِرُ فَيُنْفِقُ مِمَّا أَعْطَاهُ اللَّهُ،
وَلَعَلَّ السَّارِقَ أَنْ يَسْتَعِفَّ بِهَا عَنْ سَرَاقَتِهِ»

(A man said, "Tonight, I shall give charity." He went out with his charity and (unknowingly) gave it to an adulteress. The next morning the people said that alms were given to an adulteress. The man said, "O Allah! All the praises are for You. (I gave my alms) to an adulteress. Tonight, I shall give alms again." He went out with his charity and (unknowingly) gave it to a rich person. The next morning (the people) said, "Last night, a wealthy person was given alms." He said, "O Allah! All the praises are for You. (I gave alms) to a wealthy man. Tonight, I shall again give charity." So he went out with his charity and (unknowingly) gave it to a thief. The next morning (the people) said, "Last night, a thief was given alms." He said, "O Allah! All the praises are for You. (I have given alms) to an adulteress, a wealthy man and a thief." Then, someone came to him and said, "The alms that you gave away were accepted. As for the adulteress, the alms might make her abstain from adultery. As for the wealthy man, it might make him take a lesson and spend his wealth that Allah has given him. As for the thief, it might make him abstain from stealing.")

Who Deserves Charity

Allah said,

(لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَحْصِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ)

((Charity is) for the poor, who in Allah's cause are restricted (from travel)) meaning, the migrants who migrated to Allah and His Messenger, resided in Al-Madinah and did not have resources that sufficiently provided them with their needs,

(لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ)

(And cannot Darban (move about) in the land) meaning, "They cannot travel in the land to seek means of livelihood." Allah said in other instances using a variation of the word Darban

(وَإِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ)

(And when you (Muslims) travel in the land, there is no sin on you if you shorten the Salah (the prayer)) 4:101 , and,

(أَنْ سَيَكُونُ مِنْكُمْ مَّرْضَىٰ وَءَاخِرُونَ يَضْرِبُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَبْتَغُونَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَءَاخِرُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَاقْرَأُوا)

(He knows that there will be some among you sick, others traveling through the land, seeking of Allah's bounty, yet others fighting in Allah's cause) 73:20 .

Allah then said,

(يَحْسِبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ)

(The one who knows them not, thinks that they are rich because of their modesty) meaning, those who do not know their situation think that they are well-off, because they are modest in their clothes and speech. There is a Hadith with this meaning that the Two Sahih recorded from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah said,

«لَيْسَ الْمِسْكِينُ بِهَذَا الطَّوَّافِ الَّذِي تَرُدُّهُ التَّمْرَةُ
وَالنَّمْرَتَانِ، وَاللُّقْمَةُ وَاللُّقْمَتَانِ، وَالْأَكْلَةُ
وَالْأَكْلَتَانِ، وَلَكِنَّ الْمِسْكِينُ الَّذِي لَا يَجِدُ غِنَىٰ

يُغْنِيهِ، وَلَا يُقْطَنُ لَهُ فَيُتَصَدَّقَ عَلَيْهِ، وَلَا يَسْأَلُ
النَّاسَ شَيْئًا»

(The Miskin (needy) is not he who wanders about and whose need is sufficed by a date or two, a bite or two or a meal or two. Rather, the Miskin is he who neither has enough resources to sustain him, all the while people are unaware of his need so they do not give to him, nor does he ask people for anything.)

Imam Ahmad also recorded this Hadith from Ibn Mas'ud.

Allah's statement,

(تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ)

(You may know them by their mark) means, "Those who have good minds discover their situation," just as Allah said in other instances,

(سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ)

(The mark of them (i.e. of their faith) is on their faces) 48:29 , and,

(وَلَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ فِي لَحْنِ الْقَوْلِ)

(But surely, you will know them by the tone of their speech!) 47:30 . Allah's statement,

(لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِحَاقًا)

(they do not beg of people at all) means, they do not beg and, thus, do not require people to provide them with more than what they actually need. Indeed, those who ask people for help, while having what suffices for their needs, have begged.

Imam Ahmad recorded that Abu Sa' id said, "My mother sent me to the Messenger of Allah to ask him for help, but when I came by him I sat down. The Prophet faced me and said to me,

«مَنْ اسْتَعْنَىٰ أَغْنَاهُ اللَّهُ، وَمَنْ اسْتَعَفَّ أَعَقَّهُ اللَّهُ،
وَمَنْ اسْتَكْفَىٰ كَفَّاهُ اللَّهُ، وَمَنْ سَأَلَ وَلَهُ قِيَمَةٌ أَوْ قِيَّةٍ
فَقَدْ أَحْفَ»

(Whoever felt satisfied, then Allah will enrich him. Whoever is modest, Allah will make him decent. Whoever is content, then Allah will suffice for him. Whoever asks people, while having a small amount, he will have begged the people.)

Abu Sa`id said, "I said to myself, 'I have a camel, Al-Yaqutah, and indeed, it is worth more than a small amount.' And I went back without asking the Prophet for anything." This is the same wording for this Hadith collected by Abu Dawud and An-Nasa'i.

Allah's statement,

(وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ)

(And whatever you spend in good, surely Allah knows it well) indicates that no charity escapes Him, and He will reward it fully and perfectly on the Day of Resurrection, when it is most desperately needed.

Praise for those who Spend in Charity

Allah said,

(الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا
وَعَلَانِيَةً قَلَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ)

(Those who spend their wealth (in Allah's cause) by night and day, in secret and in public, they shall have their reward with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.)

This Ayah praises those who spend in charity for Allah's sake, seeking His pleasure, day and night, publicly and in secret, including what one spends on his family. The Two Sahihs recorded that the Messenger of Allah said to Sa`d bin Abi Waqqas:

«وَإِنَّكَ لَنْ تُنْفِقَ نَفَقَةً تَبْتَغِي بِهَا وَجْهَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا
ازْدَدْتَ بِهَا دَرَجَةً وَرَفَعَةً، حَتَّىٰ مَا تَجْعَلُ فِي فِي
امْرَأَتِكَ»

(You will not spend charity with which you seek Allah's Face, but you will ascend a higher degree and status because of it, including what you put in your wife's mouth.)

Imam Ahmad recorded that Abu Mas'ud said that the Prophet said,

«إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمَ إِذَا أَنْفَقَ عَلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ نَفَقَةً يَحْتَسِبُهَا،
كَانَتْ لَهُ صَدَقَةً»

(When the Muslim spends on his family while awaiting the reward for it from Allah, it will be written as charity for him.)

Al-Bukhari and Muslim also recorded this Hadith.

Allah said,

(قَلْبُهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ)

(shall have their reward with their Lord), on the Day of Resurrection, as reward for what they spent in acts of obedience. We previously explained the Ayah,

(فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ)

(there shall be no fear on them nor shall they grieve.)

(الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لَا يَقُومُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ
الَّذِي يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا
إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ الرِّبَا وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ

الرِّبَّوْا فَمَنْ جَاءَهُ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ فَانْتَهَى فَلَهُ مَا سَلَفَ وَأَمْرُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ)

(275. Those who eat Riba will not stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except like the standing of a person beaten by Shaytan leading him to insanity. That is because they say: "Trading is only like Riba," whereas Allah has permitted trading and forbidden Riba. So whosoever receives an admonition from his Lord and stops eating Riba, shall not be punished for the past; his case is for Allah (to judge); but whoever returns (to Riba), such are the dwellers of the Fire they will Abide therein.)

The Punishment for Dealing with Riba (Interest and Usury)

After Allah mentioned the righteous believers who give charity, pay Zakah and spend on their relatives and families at various times and conditions, He then mentioned those who deal in usury and illegally acquire people's money, using various evil methods and wicked ways. Allah describes the condition of these people when they are resurrected from their graves and brought back to life on the Day of Resurrection:

(الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لَا يَقُومُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ
الَّذِي يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ)

(Those who eat Riba will not stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except like the standing of a person beaten by Shaytan leading him to insanity.)

This Ayah means, on the Day of Resurrection, these people will get up from their graves just as the person afflicted by insanity or possessed by a demon would. Ibn `Abbas said, "On the Day of Resurrection, those who consume Riba will be resurrected while insane and suffering from seizures." Ibn Abi Hatim also recorded this and then commented, "This Tafsir was reported from `Awf bin Malik, Sa`id bin Jubayr, As-Suddi, Ar-Rabi` bin Anas, Qatadah and Muqatil bin Hayyan." Al-Bukhari recorded that Samurah bin Jundub said in the long Hadith about the dream that the Prophet had,

«فَأْتَيْنَا عَلَى نَهْرٍ حَسِبْتُ أَنَّهُ كَانَ يَقُولُ: أَحْمَرٌ
مِثْلَ الدَّمِّ، وَإِذَا فِي النَّهْرِ رَجُلٌ سَابِحٌ يَسْبَحُ، وَإِذَا
عَلَى شَطِّ النَّهْرِ رَجُلٌ قَدْ جَمَعَ عِنْدَهُ حِجَارَةً

كَثِيرَةً، وَإِذَا ذَلِكَ السَّابِحُ يَسْبَحُ مَا يَسْبَحُ، ثُمَّ يَأْتِي
ذَلِكَ الَّذِي قَدْ جَمَعَ الْحِجَارَةَ عِنْدَهُ، فَيَقْرَأُ لَهُ فَاهُ
فَيُلْقِمُهُ حَجْرًا»

(We reached a river -the narrator said, "I thought he said that the river was as red as blood"- and found that a man was swimming in the river, and on its bank there was another man standing with a large collection of stones next to him. The man in the river would swim, then come to the man who had collected the stones and open his mouth, and the other man would throw a stone in his mouth.)

The explanation of this dream was that the person in the river was one who consumed Riba.

Allah's statement,

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ الرِّبَا وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ
الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا

(That is because they say: "Trading is only like Riba," whereas Allah has permitted trading and forbidden Riba) indicates that the disbelievers claimed that Riba was allowed due to the fact that they rejected Allah's commandments, not that they equated Riba with regular trade. The disbelievers did not recognize that Allah allowed trade in the Qur'an, for if they did, they would have said, "Riba is trade." Rather, they said,

إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ الرِّبَا

(Trading is only like Riba) meaning, they are similar, so why did Allah allow this, but did not allow that, they asked in defiance of Allah's commandments.

Allah's statement,

وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا

(Whereas Allah has permitted trading and forbidden Riba) might be a continuation of the answer to the disbelievers' claim, who uttered it, although they knew that Allah decided that ruling on trade is different from that of Riba. Indeed, Allah is the Most Knowledgeable, Most Wise, Whose decision is never resisted. Allah is never asked about what He does, while they will be asked. He is knowledgeable of the true reality of all things and the benefits they carry. He knows what benefits His servants, so He allows it for them, and what harms them, so He forbids them from it. He is more merciful with them than the mother with her own infant.

Thereafter, Allah said,

(فَمَنْ جَاءَهُ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ فَاَنْتَهَىٰ فَلَهُ مَا سَلَفَ
وَأَمْرُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ)

(So whosoever receives an admonition from his Lord and stops eating Riba, shall not be punished for the past; his case is for Allah (to judge),) meaning, those who have knowledge that Allah made usury unlawful, and refrain from indulging in it as soon as they acquire this knowledge, then Allah will forgive their previous dealings in Riba,

(عَفَا اللَّهُ عَمَّا سَلَفَ)

(Allah has forgiven what is past.)

On the day Makkah was conquered the Prophet said,

«وَكُلُّ رِبَا فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ مَوْضُوعٌ تَحْتَ قَدَمِي
هَاتَيْنِ، وَأَوَّلُ رِبَا أُضْعُ، رَبَا الْعَبَّاسِ»

(All cases of Riba during the time of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic period of ignorance) is annulled and under my feet, and the first Riba I annul is the Riba of Al-'Abbas (the Prophet's uncle).)

We should mention that the Prophet did not require the return of the interest that they gained on their Riba during the time of Jahiliyyah. Rather, he pardoned the cases of Riba that occurred in the past, just as Allah said,

(فَلَهُ مَا سَلَفَ وَأَمْرُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ)

(shall not be punished for the past; his case is for Allah (to judge).)

Sa`id bin Jubayr and As-Suddi said that,

(فَلَهُ مَا سَلَفَ)

(shall not be punished for the past) refers to the Riba one consumed before it was prohibited. Allah then said,

(وَمَنْ عَادَ)

(But whoever returns) meaning, deals in Riba after gaining knowledge that Allah prohibited it, then that warrants punishment, and in this case, the proof will have been established against such person. This is why Allah said,

(قَأُولِيكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ)

(such are the dwellers of the Fire they will abide therein forever.)

Abu Dawud recorded that Jabir said, "When

(الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لَا يَقُومُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ
الَّذِي يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ)

(Those who eat Riba will not stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except like a person beaten by Shaytan leading him to insanity) was revealed, the Messenger of Allah said,

«مَنْ لَمْ يَدْرِ الْمُخَابَرَةَ فَلْيُؤْذِنْ بِحَرْبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَرَسُولِهِ»

(Whoever does not refrain from Mukhabarah, then let him receive a notice of war from Allah and His Messenger.)"

Al-Hakim also recorded this in his Mustadrak, and he said, "It is Sahih according to the criteria of Muslim, and he did not record it." Mukhabarah (sharecropping), farming land in return for some of its produce, was prohibited. Muzabanah, trading fresh dates still on trees with dried dates already on the ground, was prohibited. Muhaqalah, which refers to trading produce not yet harvested, with crops already harvested, was also prohibited. These were prohibited to eradicate the possibility that Riba might be involved, for the quality and equity of such items are only known after they become dry.

The subject of Riba is a difficult subject for many scholars. We should mention that the Leader of the Faithful, `Umar bin Al-Khattab, said, "I wished that the Messenger of Allah had made three matters clearer for us, so that we could refer to his decision: the grandfather (regarding inheriting from his grandchildren), the Kalalah (those who leave neither descendants nor ascendants as heirs) and some types of Riba." `Umar was referring to the types of transactions where it is not clear whether they involve Riba or not. The Shari`ah supports the rule that for any matter that is unlawful, then the means to it are also unlawful, because whatever results in the unlawful is unlawful, in the same way that whenever an obligation will not be complete except with something, then that something is itself an obligation.

The Two Sahihs recorded that An-Nu`man bin Bashir said that he heard the Messenger of Allah say,

«إِنَّ الْحَلَالَ بَيِّنٌ وَإِنَّ الْحَرَامَ بَيِّنٌ، وَبَيْنَ ذَلِكَ
أُمُورٌ مُشْتَبِهَاتٌ، فَمَنْ اتَّقَى الشُّبُهَاتِ اسْتَبْرَأَ
لِدِينِهِ وَعَرْضِهِ، وَمَنْ وَقَعَ فِي الشُّبُهَاتِ وَقَعَ فِي
الْحَرَامِ، كَالرَّاعِي يَرْعَى حَوْلَ الْحِمَى يُوشِكُ أَنْ
يَرْتَعَ فِيهِ»

(Both lawful and unlawful things are evident, but in between them there are matters that are not clear. So whoever saves himself from these unclear matters, he saves his religion and his honor. And whoever indulges in these unclear matters, he will have fallen into the prohibitions, just like a shepherd who grazes (his animals) near a private pasture, at any moment he is liable to enter it.)

The Sunan records that Al-Hasan bin `Ali said that he heard the Messenger of Allah say,

«دَعْ مَا يَرِيْبُكَ إِلَى مَا لَا يَرِيْبُكَ»

(Leave that which makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt.)

Ahmad recorded that Sa`id bin Al-Musayyib said that `Umar said, "The Ayah about Riba was one of the last Ayat to be revealed, and the Messenger of Allah died before he explained it to us. So leave that which makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt."

Ibn Majah recorded that Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allah said,

«الرِّبَا سَبْعُونَ حُوبًا، أَيْسَرُهَا أَنْ يَنْكِحَ الرَّجُلُ
أُمَّهُ»

(Riba is seventy types, the least of which is equal to one having sexual intercourse with his mother.)

Continuing on the subject of prohibiting the means that lead to the unlawful, there is a Hadith that Ahmad recorded in which `Aishah said, "When the Ayat in Surat Al-Baqarah about Riba were revealed, the Messenger of Allah went out to the Masjid and recited them and also

prohibited trading in alcohol." The Six collections recorded this Hadith, with the exception of At-Tirmidhi. The Two Sahihis recorded that the Messenger of Allah said,

«لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْيَهُودَ، حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الشُّحُومُ
فَجَمَلُوهَا فَبَاعُوهَا، وَأَكَلُوا أَثْمَانَهَا»

(May Allah curse the Jews! Allah forbade them to eat animal fat, but they melted it and sold it, eating its price.)

Ali and Ibn Mas'ud narrated that the Messenger of Allah said,

«لَعَنَ اللَّهُ آكِلَ الرَّبَا وَمُوكِلَهُ وَشَاهِدَيْهِ وَكَاتِبَهُ»

(May Allah curse whoever consumes Riba, whoever pays Riba, the two who are witnesses to it, and the scribe who records it.)

They say they only have witnesses and a scribe to write the Riba contract when they want it to appear to be a legitimate agreement, but it is still invalid because the ruling is applied to the agreement itself, not the form that it appears in. Verily, deeds are judged by their intentions.

(يَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ الرِّبَا وَيُرْبِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَاللَّهُ لَا
يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيمٍ - إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ لَهُمْ
أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يَحْزَنُونَ)

(276. Allah will destroy Riba and will give increase for Sadaqat. And Allah likes not the disbelievers, sinners.) (277. Truly, those who believe, and do deeds of righteousness, and perform the Salah and give Zakah, they will have their reward with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.)

Allah Does Not Bless Riba

Allah states that He destroys Riba, either by removing this money from those who eat it, or by depriving them of the blessing, and thus the benefit of their money. Because of their Riba,

Allah will torment them in this life and punish them for it on the Day of Resurrection. Allah said,

(قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ
كَثْرَةُ الْخَبِيثِ)

(Say: "Not equal are Al-Khabith (evil things) and At-Tayyib (good things), even though the abundance of Al-Khabith may please you") 5:100

(وَيَجْعَلُ الْخَبِيثَ بَعْضَهُ عَلَى بَعْضٍ فَيَرْكُمُهُ
جَمِيعًا فَيَجْعَلُهُ فِي جَهَنَّمَ)

(And put the wicked (disbelievers and doers of evil deeds) one over another, heap them together and cast them into Hell) 8:37 , and,

(وَمَا ءَاتَيْتُمْ مِّن رَّبًّا لِّيَرْبُوًّا فِي أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ فَلَا
يَرْبُوًّا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ)

(And that which you give in gift (to others), in order that it may increase (your wealth by expecting to get a better one in return) from other people's property, has no increase with Allah) 30:39 .

Ibn Jarir said that Allah's statement,

(يَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ الرِّبَا)

(Allah will destroy Riba) is similar to the statement reported of `Abdullah bin Mas`ud, "Riba will end up with less, even if it was substantial." Imam Ahmad recorded a similar statement in Al-Musnad.

Allah Increases Charity, Just as One Raises His Animal

Allah's statement,

(وَيُرِي الصَّدَقَاتِ)

(And will give increase for Sadaqat) means, Allah makes charity grow, or He increases it. Al-Bukhari recorded that Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allah said,

«مَنْ تَصَدَّقَ بِعَدْلِ تَمْرَةٍ مِنْ كَسْبٍ طَيِّبٍ، وَلَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا الطَّيِّبَ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَتَقَبَّلُهَا يَمِينِهِ، ثُمَّ يُرَبِّيهَا لِصَاحِبِهِ، كَمَا يُرَبِّي أَحَدَكُمْ فَلَوْهُ حَتَّى تَكُونَ مِثْلَ الْجَبَلِ»

(Whoever gives in charity what equals a date from honest resources, and Allah only accepts that which is good and pure, then Allah accepts it with His right (Hand) and raises it for its giver, just as one of you raises his animal, until it becomes as big as a mountain.)

This was recorded in the book of Zakah.

Allah Does not Like the Disbelieving Sinners

Allah's statement,

(وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيمٍ)

(And Allah likes not the disbelievers, sinners) indicates that Allah does not like he who has a disbelieving heart, who is a sinner in tongue and action. There is a connection between the beginning of the Ayah on Riba and what Allah ended it with. Those who consume Riba are not satisfied with the permissible and pure resources that Allah provided them. Instead, they try to illegally acquire people's money by relying on evil methods. This demonstrates their lack of appreciation for the bounty that Allah provides.

Praising Those Who Thank Allah

Allah praised those who believe in His Lordship, obey His commands, thank Him and appreciate Him. They are those who are kind to His creation, establish prayer and give charity due on their money. Allah informed them of the honor that He has prepared for them and that they will be safe from the repercussions of the Day of Resurrection. Allah said,

(إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ)

(Truly, those who believe, and do deeds of righteousness, and perform the Salah and give Zakah, they will have their reward with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.)

(يَأْيُهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَذَرُوا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ
الرِّبَا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ)

(فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ
وَإِن تَابْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ رُءُوسُ أَمْوَالِكُمْ لَا تَظْلِمُونَ وَلَا
تُظْلَمُونَ - وَإِن كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلَى
مَيْسَرَةٍ وَأَن تَصَدَّقُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ)

وَآتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ
نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ-)

(278. O you who believe! Have Taqwa of Allah and give up what remains from Riba, if you are (really) believers.) (279. And if you do not do it, then take a notice of war from Allah and His Messenger but if you repent, you shall have your capital sums. Deal not unjustly, and you shall not be dealt with unjustly.) (280. And if the debtor is having a hard time, then grant him time till it is easy for him to repay; but if you remit it by way of charity, that is better for you if you did but know.) (281. And have Taqwa the Day when you shall be brought back to Allah. Then every person shall be paid what he earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly.)

The Necessity of Taqwa and Avoiding Riba

Allah commands His believing servants to fear Him and warns them against what would bring them closer to His anger and drive them away from His pleasure. Allah said,

(يَأْيُهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ)

(O you who believe! Have Taqwa of Allah) meaning, fear Him and remember that He is watching all that you do.

(وَدَّرُوا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا)

(And give up what remains of Riba) meaning, abandon the Riba that people still owe you upon hearing this warning,

(إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ)

(if you indeed have been believers) believing in the trade that He allowed you and the prohibition of Riba. Zayd bin Aslam, Ibn Jurayj, Muqatil bin Hayyan and As-Suddi said that this Ayah was revealed about Bani `Amr bin `Umayr, a sub-tribe of Thaqif, and Bani Al-Mughirah, from the tribe of Bani Makhzum, between whom were outstanding transactions of Riba leftover from time of Jahiliyyah. When Islam came and both tribes became Muslims, Thaqif required Bani Al-Mughirah to pay the Riba of that transaction, but Bani Al-Mughirah said, "We do not pay Riba in Islam." `Attab bin Usayd, the Prophet's deputy on Makkah, wrote to the Messenger of Allah about this matter. This Ayah was then revealed and the Messenger of Allah conveyed it to `Attab,

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَدَّرُوا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ
الرِّبَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ)

(فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ)

(O you who believe! Be afraid of Allah and give up what remains (due to you) from Riba (from now onward), if you are (really) believers. And if you do not do it, then take a notice of war from Allah and His Messenger.)

They said, "We repent to Allah and abandon whatever is left of our Riba", and they all abandoned it This Ayah serves as a stern threat to those who continue to deal in Riba after Allah revealed this warning.

Riba Constitutes War Against Allah and His Messenger

Ibn Jurayj said that Ibn `Abbas said that,

(فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ)

(then take a notice of war) means, "Be sure of a war from Allah and His Messenger." He also said, "On the Day of Resurrection, those who eat Riba will be told, `take up arms for war.'" He then recited,

(فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ)

(And if you do not do it, then take a notice of war from Allah and His Messenger.)

`Ali bin Abi Talhah said that Ibn `Abbas said about,

(فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ)

(And if you do not do it, then take a notice of war from Allah and His Messenger,) "Whoever kept dealing with Riba and did not refrain from it, then the Muslim Leader should require him to repent. If he still did not refrain from Riba, the Muslim Leader should cut off his head."

Allah then said,

(وَإِنْ تُبْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ رُءُوسُ أَمْوَالِكُمْ لَا تَظْلِمُونَ)

(But if you repent, you shall have your capital sums. Deal not unjustly) by taking the Riba,

(وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ)

(And you shall not be dealt with unjustly) meaning, your original capital will not diminish. Rather, you will receive only what you lent without increase or decrease. Ibn Abi Hatim recorded that `Amr bin Al-Ahwas said, "The Messenger of Allah gave a speech during the Farewell Hajj saying;

«أَلَا إِنَّ كُلَّ رَبًّا كَانَ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ، مَوْضُوعٌ
عَنْكُمْ كُلُّهُ، لَكُمْ رُءُوسُ أَمْوَالِكُمْ لَا تَظْلِمُونَ
وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ، وَأَوَّلُ رَبًّا مَوْضُوعٌ، رَبًّا الْعَبَّاسِ
بْنِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ مَوْضُوعٌ كُلُّهُ»

(Verily, every case of Riba from the Jahiliyyah is completely annulled. You will only take back your capital, without increase or decrease. The first Riba that I annul is the Riba of Al-`Abbas bin `Abdul-Muttalib, all of it is annulled.)

Being Kind to Debtors Who Face Financial Difficulties

Allah said,

(وَإِنْ كَانَ دُوْ عُسْرَةً فَنظِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ مَيْسَرَةٍ وَأَنْ تَصَدَّقُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ)

(And if the debtor is having a hard time, then grant him time till it is easy for him to repay; but if you remit it by way of charity, that is better for you if you did but know.) Allah commands creditors to be patient with debtors who are having a hard time financially,

(وَإِنْ كَانَ دُوْ عُسْرَةً فَنظِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ مَيْسَرَةٍ)

(And if the debtor is having a hard time (has no money), then grant him time till it is easy for him to repay.)

During the time of Jahiliyyah, when the debt came to term, the creditor would say to the debtor, "Either pay now or interest will be added to the debt."

Allah encouraged creditors to give debtors respite regarding their debts and promised all that is good, and a great reward from Him for this righteous deed,

(وَأَنْ تَصَدَّقُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ)

(But if you remit it by way of charity, that is better for you if you did but know) meaning, if you forfeit your debts and cancel them completely.

Imam Ahmad recorded that Sulayman bin Buraydah said that his father said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah say,

«مَنْ أَنْظَرَ مُعْسِرًا، فَلَهُ بِكُلِّ يَوْمٍ مِثْلُهُ صَدَقَةٌ»

(Whoever gives time to a debtor facing hard times, will gain charity of equal proportions for each day he gives.)

I also heard the Prophet say,

«مَنْ أَنْظَرَ مُعْسِرًا، فَلَهُ بِكُلِّ يَوْمٍ مِثْلُهُ صَدَقَةٌ»

(Whoever gives time to a debtor facing hard times, will earn charity multiplied two times for each day he gives.) I said, `O Messenger of Allah! I heard you say, `Whoever gives time to a debtor facing hard times, will gain charity of equal proportions for each day he gives.' I also heard you say, `Whoever gives time to a debtor facing hard times, will earn charity multiplied by two times for each day he gives.' He said,

«لَهُ بِكُلِّ يَوْمٍ مِثْلُهُ صَدَقَةٌ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَحِلَّ الدَّيْنُ،
فَإِذَا حَلَّ الدَّيْنُ فَأَنْظَرَهُ، فَلَهُ بِكُلِّ يَوْمٍ مِثْلَاهُ
صَدَقَةٌ»

(He will earn charity of equal proportions for each day (he gives time) before the term of the debt comes to an end, and when the term comes to an end, he will again acquire charity multiplied by two times for each day if he gives more time.)"

Ahmad recorded that Muhammad bin Ka`b Al-Qurazi said that Abu Qatadah had a debt on a man, who used to hide from Abu Qatadah when he looked for him to pay what he owed him. One day, Abu Qatadah came looking for the debtor and a young boy came out, and he asked him about the debtor and found out that he was in the house eating. Abu Qatadah said in a loud voice, "O Fellow! Come out, for I was told that you are in the house." The man came out and Abu Qatadah asked him, "Why are you hiding from me" The man said, "I am having a hard time financially, and I do not have any money." Abu Qatadah said, "By Allah, are you truly facing a hard time" He said, "Yes." Abu Qatadah cried and said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah say,

«مَنْ نَقَّسَ عَنْ غَرِيمِهِ أَوْ مَحَا عَنْهُ، كَانَ فِي ظِلِّ
الْعَرْشِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ»

(Whoever gives time to his debtor, or forgives the debt, will be in the shade of the Throne (of Allah) on the Day of Resurrection.)"

Muslim also recorded this Hadith in his Sahih.

Al-Hafiz Abu Ya`la Al-Mawsili recorded that Hudhayfah said that the Messenger of Allah said,

«أَتَى اللَّهَ بِعَبْدِمِنْ عَيْدِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ قَالَ: مَاذَا
عَمِلْتَ لِي فِي الدُّنْيَا؟ فَقَالَ: مَا عَمِلْتُ لَكَ يَا رَبِّ
مِنْقَالَ دُرَّةٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا أَرْجُوكَ بِهَا قَالَهَا ثَلَاثَ
مَرَّاتٍ قَالَ الْعَبْدُ عِنْدَ آخِرِهَا: يَا رَبِّ إِنَّكَ كُنْتَ
أَعْطَيْتَنِي فَضْلَ مَالٍ، وَكُنْتُ رَجُلًا أَبَايِعُ النَّاسَ،

وَكَانَ مِنْ خُلُقِي الْجَوَازُ، فَكُنْتُ أَيْسَرُ عَلَى
الْمُوسِرِ وَأَنْظِرُ الْمُعْسِرَ، قَالَ: فَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ
عَزَّوَجَلَّ: أَنَا أَحَقُّ مَنْ يُيسَّرُ، ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ»

(On the Day of Resurrection, one of Allah's servants will be summoned before Him and He will ask him, "What deeds did you perform for Me in your life" He will say, "O Lord! In my life, I have not performed a deed for Your sake that equals an atom," three times. The third time, the servant will add, "O Lord! You granted me wealth and I used to be a merchant. I used to be lenient, giving easy terms to those well-off and giving time to the debtors who faced hard times." Allah will say, "I Am the Most Worthy of giving easy terms. Therefore, enter Paradise.")

Al-Bukhari, Muslim and Ibn Majah also recorded this Hadith from Hudhayfah, and Muslim recorded a similar wording from `Uqbah bin `Amir and Abu Mas`ud Al-Badri. Allah further advised His servants, by reminding them that this life will soon end and all the wealth in it will vanish. He also reminded them that the Hereafter will surely come, when the Return to Him will occur, and that He will hold His creation accountable for what they did, rewarding them or punishing them accordingly. Allah also warned them against His torment,

(وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ
نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ)

(And have Taqwa for the Day when you shall be brought back to Allah. Then every person shall be paid what he earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly.)

It was reported that this was the last Ayah revealed from the Glorious Qur'an. An-Nasa'i recorded that Ibn `Abbas said, "The last Ayah to be revealed from the Qur'an was,

(وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ
نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ)

(And have Taqwa for the Day when you shall be brought back to Allah. Then every person shall be paid what he earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly.")

This is the same narration reported by Ad-Dahhak and Al-`Awfi from Ibn `Abbas.

(يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَيْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ
 مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ وَلْيَكْتُب بَيْنَكُمْ كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ وَلَا
 يَأْب كَاتِبٌ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ
 وَلْيُمْلِلِ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا
 يَبْخَسْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا فَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ سَفِيهًا
 أَوْ ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يُمِلَّ هُوَ فَلْيُمْلِلْ وَلِيُّهُ
 بِالْعَدْلِ وَاسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ فَإِنْ لَّمْ
 يَكُنَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ مِمَّن تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ
 الشُّهَدَاءِ أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكَّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا
 الْأُخْرَىٰ وَلَا يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا وَلَا
 تَسْمُوا أَنْ تَكْتُبُوهُ صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَبِيرًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلِهِ
 ذَلِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَأَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا
 تَرْتَابُوا إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجْرَةً حَاضِرَةً يُدِيرُونَهَا
 بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا وَأَشْهِدُوا إِذَا
 تَبَايَعْتُمْ وَلَا يُضَارَّ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ وَإِنْ تَفَعَّلُوا
 فَإِنَّهُ فُسُوقٌ بِكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ
 بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ)

(282. O you who believe! When you contract a debt for a fixed period, write it down. Let a scribe write it down in justice between you. Let not the scribe refuse to write, as Allah has taught him, so let him write. Let him (the debtor) who incurs the liability dictate, and he must have Taqwa of Allah, his Lord, and diminish not anything of what he owes. But if the debtor is

of poor understanding, or weak, or is unable to dictate for himself, then let his guardian dictate in justice. And get two witnesses out of your own men. And if there are not two men (available), then a man and two women, such as you agree for witnesses, so that if one of them (two women) errs, the other can remind her. And the witnesses should not refuse when they are called (for evidence). You should not become weary to write it (your contract), whether it be small or big, for its fixed term, that is more just with Allah; more solid as evidence, and more convenient to prevent doubts among yourselves, save when it is a present trade which you carry out on the spot among yourselves, then there is no sin on you if you do not write it down. But take witnesses whenever you make a commercial contract. Let neither scribe nor witness suffer any harm, but if you do (such harm), it would be wickedness in you. So have Taqwa of Allah; and Allah teaches you. And Allah is the All-Knower of everything.)

The Necessity of Writing Transactions That Take Effect Later on

This Ayah is the longest in the Glorious Qur'an. Imam Abu Ja`far bin Jarir recorded that Sa`id bin Al-Musayyib said that he was told that the Ayah most recently revealed from above the Throne -- the last Ayah to be revealed in the Qur'an -- was the Ayah about debts.

Allah's statement,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَيْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ

(O you who believe! When you contract a debt for a fixed period, write it down) directs Allah's believing servants to record their business transactions when their term is delayed, to preserve the terms and timing of these transactions, and the memory of witnesses, as mentioned at the end of the Ayah,

ذَٰلِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَأَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوا

(that is more just with Allah; more solid as evidence, and more convenient to prevent doubts among yourselves.)

The Two Sahihs recorded that Ibn `Abbas said, "Allah's Messenger came to Al-Madinah, while the people were in the habit of paying in advance for fruits to be delivered within one or two years. The Messenger of Allah said,

«مَنْ أَسْلَفَ، فَلْيُسَلِّفْ فِي كَيْلٍ مَّعْلُومٍ، وَوَزْنٍ مَّعْلُومٍ، إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مَّعْلُومٍ»

(Whoever pays money in advance (for dates to be delivered later) should pay it for known specified measure and weight (of the dates) for a specified date.)

Allah's statement,

(فَاكْتُبُوهُ)

(write it down) is a command from Him to record such transactions to endorse and preserve their terms. Ibn Jurayj said, "Whoever borrowed should write the terms, and whoever bought should have witnesses." Abu Sa`id, Ash-Sha`bi, Ar-Rabi` bin Anas, Al-Hasan, Ibn Jurayj and Ibn Zayd said that recording such transactions was necessary before, but was then abrogated by Allah's statement,

(فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا فَلْيُؤَدِّ الَّذِي أُؤْتِمِنَ
أَمَنَّتَهُ)

(Then if one of you entrusts the other, let the one who is entrusted discharge his trust (faithfully).)

Allah's statement,

(وَلْيَكْتُبْ بَيْنَكُمْ كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ)

(Let a scribe write it down in justice between you) and in truth. Therefore, the scribe is not allowed to cheat any party of the contract and is to only record what the parties of the contract agreed to, without addition or deletion. Allah's statement,

(وَلَا يَأْبَ كَاتِبٌ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ)

(Let not the scribe refuse to write, as Allah has taught him, so let him write) means, "Those who know how to write should not refrain from writing transaction contracts when asked to do so." Further, let writing such contracts be a type of charity from the scribe for those who are not lettered, just as Allah taught him what he knew not. Therefore, let him write, just as the Hadith stated,

«إِنَّ مِنْ الصَّدَقَةِ أَنْ تُعِينَ صَانِعًا، أَوْ تَصْنَعَ
لِأَخْرَقٍ»

(It is a type of charity to help a worker and to do something for a feeble person.)

In another Hadith, the Prophet said,

«مَنْ كَتَمَ عِلْمًا يَعْلَمُهُ، أَلْجِمَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِلِجَامٍ مِنْ نَارٍ»

(Whoever kept knowledge to himself will be restrained by a bridle made of fire on the Day of Resurrection.) Mujahid and `Ata' said that if asked to do so, "The scribe is required to record."

Allah's statement,

(وَلْيُمْلِلِ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ)

(Let him (the debtor) who incurs the liability dictate, and he must have Taqwa of Allah, his Lord) indicates that the debtor should dictate to the scribe what he owes, so let him fear Allah,

(وَلَا يَخْسُ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا)

(And diminish not anything of what he owes,) meaning, not hide any portion of what he owes.

(فَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ سَفِيهًا)

(But if the debtor is of poor understanding) and is not allowed to decide on such matters, because he used to waste money, for instance,

(أَوْ ضَعِيفًا)

(Or weak), such as being too young or insane,

(أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يُمْلَأَ هُوَ)

(Or is unable to dictate for himself) because of a disease, or ignorance about such matters,

(فَلْيُمْلِلْ وَلِيُّهُ بِالْعَدْلِ)

(then let his guardian dictate in justice.)

Witnesses Should Attend the Dictation of Contracts

Allah said,

(وَاسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ)

(And get two witnesses out of your own men) requiring witnesses to attend the dictation of contracts to further preserve the contents,

(فَإِن لَّمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ)

(And if there are not two men (available), then a man and two women) this requirement is only for contracts that directly or indirectly involve money. Allah requires that two women take the place of one man as witness, because of the woman's shortcomings, as the Prophet described. Muslim recorded in his Sahih that Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allah said,

«يَا مَعْشَرَ النِّسَاءِ تَصَدَّقْنَ وَأَكْثِرْنَ الِاسْتِعْفَارَ،
فَإِنِّي رَأَيْتُكُنَّ أَكْثَرَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ»

(O women! Give away charity and ask for forgiveness, for I saw that you comprise the majority of the people of the Fire.)

One eloquent woman said, "O Messenger of Allah! Why do we comprise the majority of the people of the Fire" He said,

«تُكْفِرُنَّ اللَّعْنَ، وَتَكْفُرُنَّ الْعَشِيرَ، وَمَا رَأَيْتُ مِنْ
نَاقِصَاتِ عَقْلِ وَدِينٍ، أَغْلَبَ لِيْذِي لُبٍ مِنْكُنَّ»

(You curse a lot and you do not appreciate your mate. I have never seen those who have shortcoming in mind and religion controlling those who have sound minds, other than you.) She said, "O Messenger of Allah! What is this shortcoming in mind and religion" He said,

«أَمَّا نُقْصَانُ عَقْلِهَا، فَشَهَادَةُ امْرَأَتَيْنِ تَعْدِلُ
شَهَادَةَ رَجُلٍ، فَهَذَا نُقْصَانُ الْعَقْلِ، وَتَمَكُّتُ اللَّيَالِي

لَا تُصَلِّي وَتُقَطِّرُ فِي رَمَضَانَ، فَهَذَا نُقْصَانُ
الدِّينِ»

(As for the shortcoming in her mind, the testimony of two women equals the testimony of one man, and this is the shortcoming in the mind. As for the shortcoming in the religion, woman remains for nights at a time when she does not pray and breaks the fast in Ramadan)

Allah's statement,

(مِمَّنْ تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ)

(such as you agree for witnesses) requires competency in the witnesses. Further, Allah's statement,

(أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا)

(so that if one of them errs) refers to the two women witnesses; whenever one of them forgets a part of the testimony,

(فَتَذَكَّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى)

(the other can remind her) meaning, the other woman's testimony mends the shortcoming of forgetfulness in the first woman.

Allah's statement,

(وَلَا يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا)

(And the witnesses should not refuse when they are called) means, when people are called to be witnesses, they should agree, as Qatadah and Ar-Rabi` bin Anas stated. Similarly, Allah said,

(وَلَا يَأْبَ كَاتِبٌ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ)

(Let not the scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him,

«أَمَّا نُقْصَانُ عَقْلِهَا، فَشَهَادَةُ امْرَأَتَيْنِ تَعْدِلُ
شَهَادَةَ رَجُلٍ، فَهَذَا نُقْصَانُ الْعَقْلِ، وَتَمَكُّتُ اللَّيَالِي
لَا تُصَلِّي وَتُفْطِرُ فِي رَمَضَانَ، فَهَذَا نُقْصَانُ
الدِّينِ»

(As for the shortcoming in her mind, the testimony of two women equals the testimony of one man, and this is the shortcoming in the mind. As for the shortcoming in the religion, woman remains for nights at a time when she does not pray and breaks the fast in Ramadan)

Allah's statement,

(مِمَّن تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ)

(such as you agree for witnesses) requires competency in the witnesses. Further, Allah's statement,

(أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا)

(so that if one of them errs) refers to the two women witnesses; whenever one of them forgets a part of the testimony,

(فَتُذَكَّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى)

(the other can remind her) meaning, the other woman's testimony mends the shortcoming of forgetfulness in the first woman.

Allah's statement,

(وَلَا يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا)

(And the witnesses should not refuse when they are called) means, when people are called to be witnesses, they should agree, as Qatadah and Ar-Rabi` bin Anas stated. Similarly, Allah said,

(وَلَا يَأْبَ كَاتِبٌ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ)

(Let not the scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him, so let him write.)

Some say that this Ayah indicates that agreeing to become a witness is Fard Kifayah (required on at least a part of the Muslim Ummah). However, the majority of the scholars say that the Ayah,

(وَلَا يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا)

(And the witnesses should not refuse when they are called) is referring to testifying to what the witnesses actually witnessed, thus befitting their description of being `witnesses'. Therefore, when the witness is called to testify to what he witnessed, he is required to give testimony, unless this obligation was already fulfilled, in which case such testimony becomes Fard Kifayah. Mujahid and Abu Mijlaz said, "If you are called to be a witness, then you have the choice to agree. If you witnessed and were called to testify, then come forward." It was reported that Ibn `Abbas and Al-Hasan Al-Basri said that the obligation includes both cases, agreeing to be a witness and testifying to what one witnessed.

Allah's statement,

(وَلَا تَسْمُوا أَنْ تَكْتُبُوهُ صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَبِيرًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلِهِ)

(You should not become weary to write it (your contract), whether it be small or large, for its fixed term) perfects this direction from Allah by commanding that the debt be written, whether the amount is large or small. Allah said,

(وَلَا تَسْمُوا)

(You should not become weary) meaning, do not be discouraged against writing transactions and their terms, whether the amount involved is large or small. Allah's statement,

(ذَلِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَأَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوا)

(that is more just with Allah; more solid as evidence, and more convenient to prevent doubts among yourselves) means, writing transactions that will be fulfilled at a later date is more just with Allah meaning better and more convenient in order to preserve the terms of the contract. Therefore, recording such agreements helps the witnesses, when they see their handwriting - or signatures - later on and thus remember what they witnessed, for it is possible that the witnesses might forget what they witnessed.

(وَأَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوا)

(And more convenient to prevent doubts among yourselves) meaning, this helps repel any doubt. Since if you need to refer to the contract that you wrote and the doubt will end.

Allah's statement,

(إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ
فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا)

(save when it is a present trade which you carry out on the spot among yourselves, then there is no sin on you if you do not write it down) indicates that if the transaction will be fulfilled immediately, then there is no harm if it is not recorded.

As for requiring witnesses to be present in trading transactions, Allah said,

(وَأَشْهِدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ)

(But take witnesses whenever you make a commercial contract.)

However, this command was abrogated by,

(فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا فَلْيُؤَدِّ الَّذِي أُؤْتِمِنَ
أَمَنَّتْهُ)

(Then if one of you entrusts the other, let the one who is entrusted discharge his trust (faithfully).)

Or, it could be that having witnesses in such cases is only recommended and not obligatory, as evident from the Hadith that Khuzaymah bin Thabit Al-Ansari narrated which Imam Ahmad collected. ` Umarah bin Khuzaymah Al-Ansari said that his uncle, who was among the Prophet's Companions, told him that the Prophet was making a deal for a horse with a bedouin man. The Prophet asked the bedouin to follow him so that he could pay him the price of the horse. The Prophet went ahead of the bedouin. The bedouin met several men who tried to buy his horse, not knowing if the Prophet was actually determined to buy it. Some people offered more money for the horse than the Prophet had. The bedouin man said to the Prophet , "If you want to buy this horse, then buy it or I will sell it to someone else." When he heard the bedouin man's words, the Prophet stood up and said, "Have I not bought that horse from you" The bedouin said, "By Allah! I have not sold it to you." The Prophet said, "Rather, I did buy it from you." The people gathered around the Prophet and the Bedouin while they were disputing, and the bedouin said, "Bring forth a witness who testifies that I sold you the horse." Meanwhile, the

Muslims who came said to the bedouin, "Woe to you! The Prophet only says the truth." When Khuzaymah bin Thabit came and heard the dispute between the Prophet and the bedouin who was saying, "Bring forth a witness who testifies that I sold you the horse, " Khuzaymah said, "I bear witness that you sold him the horse." The Prophet said to Khuzaymah, "What is the basis of your testimony" Khuzaymah said, "That I entrusted you, O Messenger of Allah!" Therefore, the Messenger made Khuzaymah's testimony equal to the testimony of two men. This was also recorded by Abu Dawud and An-Nasa @299 . Allah's statement,

(وَلَا يُضَارَّ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ)

(Let neither scribe nor witness suffer (or cause) any harm) also indicates that the scribe and the witness must not cause any harm, such as, when the scribe writes other than what he is being dictated, or the witness testifies to other than what he heard or conceals his testimony. This is the explanation of Al-Hasan and Qatadah."

Allah's statement,

(وَإِنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَإِنَّهُ فُسُوقٌ بِكُمْ)

(But if you do (such harm), it would be wickedness in you) means, "If you defy what you were commanded and commit what you were prohibited, then it is because of the sin that resides and remains with you; sin that you never release or rid yourselves from."

Allah's statement,

(وَ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ)

(So have Taqwa of Allah) means, fear Him, remember His watch over you, implement His command and avoid what He prohibited,

(وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ)

(And Allah teaches you.) Similarly, Allah said,

(يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنْ تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَكُمْ
فُرْقَانًا)

(O you who believe! If you have Taqwa of Allah, He will grant you Furqan (a criterion to judge between right and wrong)) 8:29 , and,

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَءَامِنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ
يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِن رَّحْمَتِهِ وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ نُورًا
تَمْشُونَ بِهِ)

(O you who believe! Have Taqwa of Allah, and believe in His Messenger, He will give you a double portion of His mercy, and He will give you a light by which you shall walk (straight))
57:28 .

Allah said;

(وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ)

(And Allah is the All-Knower of everything) stating that Allah has perfect knowledge in all matters and in their benefits or repercussions, and nothing escapes His perfect watch, for His knowledge encompasses everything in existence.

(وَإِن كُنْتُمْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِبًا فَرِهْنَ
مَقْبُوضَةً فَإِنِ مِن بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضًا فُلْيُودٌ الَّذِي
أَوْثَمِنَ أَمْنَتَهُ وَلِيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ
وَمَن يَكْتُمهَا فَإِنَّهُ ءَاتِمٌ قَلْبُهُ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
عَلِيمٌ)

(283. And if you are on a journey and cannot find a scribe, then let there be a pledge taken (mortgaging), then if one of you entrusts the other, let the one who is entrusted discharge his trust, and let him have Taqwa of Allah, his Lord. And conceal not the evidence, for he who hides it, surely, his heart is sinful. And Allah is All-Knower of what you do.)

What is the `Mortgaging' Mentioned in the Ayah

Allah said,

(وَإِن كُنْتُمْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ)

(And if you are on a journey) meaning, traveling and some of you borrowed some money to be paid at a later date,

(وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِبًا)

(and cannot find a scribe) who would record the debt for you. Ibn `Abbas said, "And even if they find a scribe, but did not find paper, ink or pen." Then,

(فَرَهْنٌ مَّقْبُوضَةٌ)

(let there be a pledge taken (mortgaging)) given to the creditor in lieu of writing the transaction. The Two Sahihs recorded that Anas said that the Messenger of Allah died while his shield was mortgaged with a Jew in return for thirty Wasq (approximately 180 kg) of barley, which the Prophet bought on credit as provisions for his household. In another narration, the Hadith stated that this Jew was among the Jews of Al-Madinah.

Allah said,

(فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا فَلْيُؤَدِّ الَّذِي أُؤْتِمِنَ
أَمَنَّتَهُ)

(then if one of you entrusts the other, let the one who is entrusted discharge his trust (faithfully).)

Ibn Abi Hatim recorded, with a sound chain of narration, that Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri said, "This Ayah abrogated what came before it (i.e. that which required recording the transaction and having witnesses present)." Ash-Sha`bi said, "If you trust each other, then there is no harm if you do not write the loan or have witnesses present." Allah's statement,

(وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ)

(And let him have Taqwa of Allah) means, the debtor.

Imam Ahmad and the Sunan recorded that Qatadah said that Al-Hasan said that Samurah said that the Messenger of Allah said,

«عَلَى الْيَدِ مَا أَخَذْتُ، حَتَّى تُؤَدِّيَهُ»

(The hand (of the debtor) will carry the burden of what it took until it gives it back.)

Allah's statement,

(وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ)

(And conceal not the evidence) means, do not hide it or refuse to announce it. Ibn `Abbas and other scholars said, "False testimony is one of the worst of the major sins, and such is the case with hiding the true testimony. This is why Allah said,

(وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ ءَاتِمٌ قَلْبُهُ)

(For he who hides it, surely, his heart is sinful).

As-Suddi commented, "Meaning he is a sinner in his heart."

This is similar to Allah's statement,

(وَلَا نَكْتُمُ شَهَادَةَ اللَّهِ إِنَّا إِذًا لَمِنَ الْآثِمِينَ)

(We shall not hide testimony of Allah, for then indeed we should be of the sinful) 5:106 .

Allah said,

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ
شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ
وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا
فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَن تَعْدِلُوا وَإِن تَلَوُوا أَوْ
تُعْرَضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا)

(O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even though it be against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, be he rich or poor, Allah is a better Protector to both (than you). So follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you avoid justice; and if you distort your witness or refuse to give it, verily, Allah is Ever Well-Acquainted with what you do) 4:135 and in this Ayah 2:283 He said,

وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ آتِمٌ قَلْبُهُ
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ

(And conceal not the evidence, for he who hides it, surely, his heart is sinful. And Allah is All-Knower of what you do.)

اللَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبْدُوا
مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبِكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ فَيَغْفِرُ
لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيرٌ

(284. To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth, and whether you disclose what is in yourselves or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it. Then He forgives whom He wills and punishes whom He wills. And Allah is able to do all things.)

Would the Servants be Accountable for What They Conceal in Their Hearts

Allah states that His is the kingship of the heavens and earth and of what and whoever is on or between them, that He has perfect watch over them. No apparent matter or secret that the heart conceals is ever a secret to Him, however minor it is. Allah also states that He will hold His servants accountable for what they do and what they conceal in their hearts. In similar statements, Allah said,

قُلْ إِنْ تُخْفُوا مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ أَوْ تُبْدُوهُ يَعْلَمُهُ
اللَّهُ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

(Say (O Muhammad): "Whether you hide what is in your breasts or reveal it, Allah knows it, and He knows what is in the heavens and what is in the earth. And Allah is able to do all things)
3:29 , and,

(يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ وَأَخْفَى)

(He knows the secret and that which is yet more hidden.)

There are many other Ayat on this subject. In this Ayah 2:284 , Allah states that He has knowledge of what the hearts conceal, and consequently, He will hold the creation accountable for whatever is in their hearts. This is why when this Ayah was revealed, it was hard on the Companions, since out of their strong faith and conviction, they were afraid that such reckoning would diminish their good deeds.

Imam Ahmad recorded that Abu Hurayrah said, "When

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبْدُوا
مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبِكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ فَيَغْفِرُ
لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيرٌ)

(To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth, and whether you disclose what is in yourselves or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it. Then He forgives whom He wills and punishes whom He wills. And Allah is able to do all things)

was revealed to the Messenger of Allah , it was very hard for the Companions of the Messenger . The Companions came to the Messenger and fell to their knees saying, `O Messenger of Allah! We were asked to perform what we can bear of deeds: the prayer, the fast, Jihad and charity. However, this Ayah was revealed to you, and we cannot bear it.' The Messenger of Allah said,

«أَتُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَقُولُوا كَمَا قَالَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابَيْنِ مِنْ
قَبْلِكُمْ: سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا؟ بَلْ قُولُوا: سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا
غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ»

(Do you want to repeat what the People of the Two Scriptures before you said, that is, `We hear and we disobey' Father, say, `We hear and we obey, and we seek Your forgiveness, O our Lord, and the Return is to You.)

When the people accepted this statement and their tongues recited it, Allah sent down afterwards,