

## Section 12

### Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 106-107

مَا نَنْسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِن وَّلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ

**106. "Whatever We abrogate of a verse or cause it to be forgotten, We bring a better or the like of it. Do you not know that Allah has power over all things? "**

**107. "Do you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and that, besides Allah, you have neither guardian nor helper?"**

#### Purpose of Abrogation

The central meaning of these verses is again the Jewish evil propaganda against the Muslims.

The Jews occasionally said that the true religion was the religion of the Jews and the real Qiblah was the direction that they used for their prayers. The evidence supporting their idea was that the Prophet of Islam (S) used to pray toward their Qiblah (Jerusalem).

But when the command for changing the Qiblah from Jerusalem to the Ka'bah came down and, according to verse 144 from this very Surah, Muslims had to pray toward the direction of Mecca (Ka'bah), this pretext was taken away from the Jews.

Therefore, they tried to assert a new pretext and said that if the first Qiblah was right, then what was the second instruction for? And, if the second instruction was correct, then the Muslims' previous religious actions performed towards Jerusalem would be considered invalid.

The Qur'an replies to their objections through these verses and, thereby, enlightens the hearts of the believers. It says:

***"Whatever We abrogate of a verse or cause it to be forgotten, We bring a better or the like of it."***

And it is easy for Allah, of course:

***"...Do you not know that Allah has power over all things?"***

***"Do you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and that, besides Allah, you have neither guardian nor helper?"***

***"Do you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth..."***

Allah has the right to change His ordinances in any form He pleases and He is the most knowledgeable of all as to the welfare of His servants.

***"...and that, besides Allah, you have neither guardian nor helper?"***

In fact, the first part of this verse denotes the absolute sovereignty of Allah in religious ordinances and that He is able to recognize and has the required knowledge to decide what is good for His creatures. Then, believers should not hearken to the vain words of some self-centered fellows who have doubt in the abrogations of the Divine Ordinances.

And the second part of the verse is a warning to those who choose refuge and support in other than Allah, because there is no real support in the world save Allah.

It should also be noted that the term / nasx / 'abrogation' in philology means: 'to abolish, destroy', and from the point of view of religion it means: 'to nullify a rule and substitute another in its place'. The detailed explanation about this subject will be discussed later.

## **Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 108**

أَمْ تُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَسْأَلُوا رَسُولَكُمْ كَمَا سُئِلَ مُوسَىٰ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ

**108. "Or do you desire to question your Messenger (Muhammad) as Moses was questioned aforetime? And he who exchanges Faith for infidelity, he has surely strayed from the right way."**

### **Occasion of Revelation**

In the books you may find some apparently different occasions of revelation for this verse, but their conclusions are nearly the same. A few of them are as follows:

One of the occasions of revelation upon the above verse has been narrated by Ibn Abbas. It is stated that once Wahab-ibn-Zayd and Rafi'-ibn-Harmalah came to the holy Prophet (S) and asked him to bring a letter from Allah for them to read and then they might believe. Or, it happened that he (S) was asked to make some streams appear and flow for them so that they might follow him.

Some other commentators have said that a group of Arabs wanted from the Prophet of Islam (S) the same things that the Jews wanted from Moses (as). They asked him to show the Lord clearly so that they could see Him with their own eyes and then they would believe.

As a response to them for their demand, the above verse was revealed.

### Some Futile Pretexts

The addressees, in this verse, are some Muslims whose Faith was feeble, or the pagans. The Jews are not mentioned directly in this verse but, as we will explain later, it is not far removed from the story of the Jews.

It was, perhaps, after the event of the change of the Qiblah that some of Muslims and pagans, affected by the temptations of the Jews, requested some vain and futile demands from the holy Prophet (S), the examples of which were cited in the above. *Allah*, the Almighty, forbade them to ask such questions. The Qur'an says:

***"Or do you desire to question your Messenger (Muhammad) as Moses was questioned aforetime?..."***

But you have decided, indeed, to evade believing by the acceptance of these vain pretexts.

In view of the fact that this action is a way of exchanging Faith for blasphemy, at the end of the verse it adds:

***"...And he who exchanges Faith for infidelity, he has surely strayed from the right way."***

It should be noted that Islam has never prevented people from asking scientific or logical questions, as well as asking the Prophet (S) to perform miracles in order to prove the Divine rightfulness of his prophecy, because the means of gaining understanding and Faith are the same.

But there were some people who asked some futile questions and demanded some irrational pretexts in order to shirk the invitation of the holy Prophet (S).

### Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 109-110

وَدَّ كَثِيرٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوْ يَرُدُّونَكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِكُمْ كُفَّارًا حَسَدًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ أَنفُسِهِمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ فَاعْتَرُوا

وَاصْفَحُوا حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِن خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

**109. "Many of the people of the (earlier) Book wish they could turn you back to be infidel, after you have believed, out of their own envy, even after the truth was manifest to them. (Nevertheless) forgive and overlook till Allah brings about His command, truly Allah has power over all things."**

**110. "And keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates; whatever good you shall forward for yourselves, you shall find it with Allah; surely Allah sees what you do."**

### **Envy and Obstnacy**

There were many members of the People of the Book, especially those of the Jews, who not only disbelieved in Islam but they also urged the believers to abandon their Faith. Their motive, for this action, was nothing but envy.

Through the above mentioned verses, the Qur'an addresses this matter by saying:

***"Many of the people of the (earlier) Book wish they could turn you back to be infidel, after you have believed, out of their own envy, even after the truth was manifest to them..."***

Here, the Qur'an bids the believers to forgive them their evil endeavours aiming at the destruction of Faith until *Allah* sends His command:

***"...(Nevertheless) forgive and overlook till Allah brings about His command, truly Allah has power over all things."***

This is, in fact, a tactical instruction given to Muslims that they should stand firm before the intense pressure of the enemies; and in this particular circumstance utilize the weapon of forgiveness while they focus their abilities upon constructing themselves and their Islamic society, and wait for the command of *Allah*.

As a great many of the commentators have said, the purpose of 'the command of *Allah*' here, is 'the command for the Holy War' which at that time had not been revealed yet.

The reason for the delay may have been that their conditions were not completely appropriate for that command. That was why, according to many of the commentators, the idea in this verse was changed by the subsequent verses regarding 'the Holy War', which will be referred to later.

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The verse following the above one bids the believers to perform two great constructive commands. One of them is about 'prayer' which establishes a firm relationship between the servant and his Lord. The second is alms-giving, which is the secret of cohesiveness among the members of societies. These two are necessary for defeating enemies. It says:

***"And keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates..."***

By these two deeds you may strengthen both your spirit and body. Then, it adds that you should not think that the good deeds you do and the material wealth you pay as poor-rates in the way of *Allah* will be lost totally. It is not so, but:

***"...whatever good you shall forward for yourselves, you shall find it with Allah..." "...surely Allah sees what you do."***

Thus, He definitely knows which deeds you have done for His sake and which ones for the sake of other than Him.

## **Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 111-112**

وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

بَلَى مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

**111. "And they said: 'None shall enter Paradise except one who is a Jew or a Christian.' Such are their fancies. Say: 'Bring your proof, if you are truthful'. "**

**112. "Yes! Whoever submits himself entirely to Allah, and he is a doer of good, his reward is with his Lord; no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve."**

In the above verses, the Qur'an has referred to one of the other vain, inappropriate statements of a group of the Jews and the Christians, and then, it has responded to them with a knockdown answer. It is as thus:

***"And they said: 'None shall enter Paradise except one who is a Jew or a Christian'..."***

In reply to them, at first, it says:

***"...Such are their fancies...."***, and they will never reach such wishes. Then, addressing the Prophet (S) it says:

***"...Say: 'Bring your proof, if you are truthful'. "***

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Every claim needs its own proof for verification. When the fact became clear that they had not any proof for their claim and that their insistence that Paradise was exclusively theirs, which was merely a bare desire of theirs, the essential basic criterion for entering Paradise was given, as a general law in this verse, as it says:

***"Yes! Whoever submits himself entirely to Allah, and he is a doer of good, his reward is with his Lord..."***

Therefore,

***"...no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve."***

In short, the fact is that entering Paradise, the reward of Allah, and attaining felicity and salvation in the coming eternal life is exclusive to no tribe or particular race, but these merits belong to the ones who have the following two attributes:

The first attribute is that the person should submit himself wholly to the commands of *Allah*, and obey all of His commandments without considering any difference between this ordinance or that one.

It should not be so that he accepts those commandments that are compatible with what he considers his benefit and puts aside those that are opposite to that which he desires. Yes, such ones are entirely submitted to *Allah's* Will.

The second attribute is that the effect of Faith is illustrated in their deeds in the form of good actions. These people are good to all human beings in all of their affairs.

By this statement, in fact, the Qur'an, as a general rule, nullifies the inappropriate racial bigotries, and absolutely dismisses true salvation and happiness from the confinement of a special tribe. To sum it up, the verse distinguishes Faith and good deeds as criterion for true felicity.

## **Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 113**

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتِ النَّصَارَىٰ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَىٰ لَيْسَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَهُمْ يَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

***113. "The Jews said: 'The Christians rest on naught', and the Christians said: 'The Jews rest on naught'; yet they (both) recite the (same) Book. Even so, similar to their sayings, spoke those who know not. Allah will judge between them on the Day of Judgement in what they differ."***

### **Occasion of Revelation**

Some of the commentators have narrated from Ibn Abbas that when a group of Christians who were

from Najran were attending a gathering of the Prophet's (S), some of the Jewish scholars were there, too.

These two groups began disputing with each other before the Prophet (S). Rafi'–ibn–Harmalah, one of the Jews, turned to the Christians and said that their religion was based on naught. Thus, he was rejecting the prophethood of Jesus (as) and his Divine Book.

Then, a man from among the Christians from Najran, too, replied to him with a similar expression and said that the religion of the Jews was based on naught. Thus, he also rejected both the prophethood of Moses (as) and the Turah. It was at that time that the above verse was revealed and reproached both groups for their fabricated statements. [1](#)

### **Exclusivity, the Fruit of Ignorance**

In the previous verse, we became acquainted with a portion of the rootless claims of a group of the Jews and the Christians. The verse under discussion indicates that when a proof less claim comes forth, it results in exclusivity and then leads to contradiction.

***"The Jews said: 'The Christians rest on naught', and Christians said: 'The Jews rest on naught'..."***

The phrase: 'rest on naught' may mean that they have no rank and honour with *Allah*; or their belief is not a thing worthwhile.

Then, to complete the above idea, it adds:

***"...yet they (both) recite the (same) Book..."***

That is, with the Divine Book that they have in their hands which can guide them toward the right path concerning these problems, it is surprising that they say such words which originate from nowhere except prejudice and enmity.

Then the Qur'an continues saying:

***"...Even so, similar to their sayings, spoke those who know not."***

(Although these are the People of the Book and those are pagans or idolaters.)

This verse introduces ignorance as the origin of bigotry and prejudice, because ignorant people are always shut in their own worlds and do not accept other than that which they know. They seriously believe only in the Faith that they have been acquainted with from their early childhood, even if it is false or superstitious. Therefore, they put aside everything other than that which they believe.

At the end of the verse, it says:

***"...Allah will judge between them on the Day of Judgment in what they differ."***

It is in the Hereafter where the facts will be entirely evident and the proof and references of all things will become perfectly manifest. None will be able to deny what is right and, thus, there will remain no dispute. Yes, one of the special characteristics of the Resurrection Day is that all disagreements will come to an end.

By the way, the above verse reminds Muslims that although the followers of these religions have stood against them and rejected Islam, therefore, they need not be worried because the Jews and Christians do not verify even themselves. Each of them nullifies the other and, in principle, ignorance is the origin of bigotry and bigotry is the source of exclusivity.

1. Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 188, & Tafsir Ghartabi and Tafsir Almanar

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