

Explanation of Al-Baqarah Surah Verses: 40-43

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By: Shaykh Abul-Hasan 'Ali ar-Ramli

{ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِي أُوفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُونِ }

"O Children of Israel! Remember My Favour which I bestowed upon you, and fulfill (your obligations to) My Covenant (with you) so that I fulfill (My Obligations to) your covenant (with Me), and fear none but Me." (Al-Baqarah 2:40)

"O Children of Israel!": O Children of Ya'qub (Jacob) who is the son of Is-haaq who is the son of Ibrahim (Abraham) the intimate friend of Allah [Exalted be He]. Jacob was called Israel which means: the slave of Allah.

"My Favour": i.e. all the favours that Allah has bestowed upon the children of Israel. Imam At-tabaree (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: "From among the favours that Allah [Exalted be He] has bestowed upon the children of Israel are the following:

- 1-The selection of messengers from among them.
- 2- The revelation of the holy books.
- 3- Saving them from the agonies of Pharaoh and his people.
- 4- Enabling them to gain power on earth.
- 5- Causing springs of water to gush forth out of stone.
- 6- Feeding them with Al-Manna and quails.

So Allah [Exalted be He] ordered the children to remember what He has bestowed upon their grand fathers and not to forget His favours lest they deserve the punishment which Allah prepares for who forgets His favours and denies them."

"and fulfill (your obligations to) My Covenant (with you)": i.e. fulfill your obligations perfectly and completely and the covenant was to perform the prayers, give the zakât (money due) and believe in the messengers. Allah [Exalted be He] said:

"Indeed Allâh took the covenant from the Children of Israel (Jews), and We appointed twelve leaders among them. And Allâh said: "I am with you if you perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât) and give Zakât and believe in My Messengers; honour and assist them, and lend to Allâh a good loan." (Al-Ma'idah 5:12)

"so that I fulfill (My Obligations to) your covenant (with Me)": i.e. I will give you what I have promised you according to My covenant with you as a reward for the mentioned deeds. Allah ended the verse saying:

"Verily, I will remit your sins and admit you to Gardens under which rivers flow (in Paradise). But if any of you after this, disbelieved, he has indeed gone astray from the Straight Path." (Al-Ma'idah 5:12)

"and fear none but Me.": Irhaboon means: fear Me greatly.

{ وَآمِنُوا بِمَا أُنْزِلَتْ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ وَلَا تَكُونُوا أَوَّلَ كَافِرٍ بِهِ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا وَإِيَّايَ فَاتَّقُونِ }

"And believe in what I have sent down, confirming that which is with you, and be not the first to disbelieve therein, and buy not with My Verses a small price and fear Me and Me Alone." (Al-Baqarah 2:41)

"And believe in what I have sent down": i.e. the Qur'an which has been sent down upon the Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him).

"confirming that which is with you": the Qur'an is confirming that which with the children of Israel (i.e. the Taurât (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel)). So Allah [Exalted be He] ordered them to believe in Qur'an and told them that by this belief they confirm their belief in Taurât. Because the three books (i.e. Taurât, Injeel and Qur'an) reported the Command of Allah to believe in the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and to follow him, and in belying him they, in fact, belie the Taurât and Injeel.

"and be not the first to disbelieve therein": O you people of scripture do not be the first to deny and belie the Qur'an while you, particularly, have the knowledge about it while others do not.

Imam At-tabaree (may Allah have mercy upon him) said:

" O you the rabbis of people of scripture believe in what I have sent down to My messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him); the Qur'an which confirms your book and it is mentioned in your Taurât and Injeel that he is My messenger and the prophet whom I have sent with the truth. So do not be the first to deny and belie that while you have the knowledge about it and others do not. Their disbelief of him means that they deny that he was sent by Allah."

"and buy not with My Verses a small price": i.e. do not replace your belief of My verses and your belief of My messenger with the worldly life and its lusts because they are few and vanish soon. It is also said that it means: Do not replace clarifications and spreading good knowledge with hiding and confusion for the sake of being the leaders in this mean vanishing worldly life.

Utilization:

Taking fare for teaching knowledge:

Ibn Katheer, in his exegesis, said:" and concerning teaching the knowledge for fare; if he was appointed (i.e.by the Amir or governor) to teach the knowledge then it is impermissible for him to take fare from people, yet it is permissible to take from baitulmal (the exchequer) the amount that is adequate for him and his family. If he does not receive anything from baitulmal and teaching takes all of his time so that he cannot work for living, so in this case he is as if he is not appointed. So once he is not appointed then it is permissible for him to take fare as stated by Imams; Malik, Shafi'ee, Ahmad and the majority of scholars, as narrated in Saheeh Al-Bukharee on the authority of Abu Sa'eed regarding the story of the tribesman who was bitten by a snake (or stung by a scorpion), the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "You are most entitled to take wages for (doing a Ruqya with) Allah's Book." And in the story of the woman who wanted to give up herself to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and a man said: "Marry her to me." The Prophet then said:"We agree to marry her to you with what you know of the Qur'an by heart."

As for the hadeeth of Ubadah bin As-samit and that he taught a man from among the people of Suffah something of the Qur'an and the man gave him (as a gift) a bow, then Ubadah told the Prophet (peace be upon him) about that and the Prophet said:"If you like to be surrounded with a bow of fire then accept it" so Ubadah did not accept it, narrated by Abu Dawood. There is another similar hadeeth on the authority of Ubai Bin Ka'b raised (i.e. attributed to the Prophet). If this hadeeth came up to be saheeh (sound) then many scholars, such as Ibn 'Abdul-Barr, said that it is because once Ubadah taught that man for the sake of Allah, then it was not permissible for him to exchange the reward of Allah [Exalted be He] with that bow. However if he did that for fare from the beginning, then it is permissible as preceded in the hadeeth of the bitten tribesman and the hadeeth of the woman who offered herself to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Allah knows best.

"and fear Me and Me Alone.": Talq bin Habeeb said: "Taqwaa (fear from Allah) means: to act upon obedience to Allah, according a guidance of Him, hoping to gain the mercy of Him. And to abandon disobedience to Allah, according a

guidance of Him, fearing the punishment of Him."

{وَلَا تَلِيسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ}

"And mix not truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth while you know (the truth)." (Al-Baqarah 2:42)

"And mix not truth with falsehood": Qatadah said: "Do not mix the Judaism and the Nazaritism with Islam while you know well that the true religion is Islam and that the Judaism and the Nazaritism are just an innovation far away from Allah.

"nor conceal the truth while you know (the truth).": i.e. Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is Allâh's Messenger and his qualities are written in your Scriptures, the Taurât (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel).

{وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ}

"And Aqimo-as-Salât (perform the prayers), and give Zakât, and Irka'oo (i.e. bow down) along with ArRaki'ûn." (Al-Baqarah 2:43)

Muqatil said: "Allah ordered the people of Scripture to pray with the Prophet (peace be upon him). He also ordered them to give the Zakât to the Prophet and to bow down along with the prayers from among the nation of Muhammad (peace be upon him)."

Ibn Katheer said: "Many scholars considered this verse as an evidence to prove the obligatory of performing the prayers in congregation. More details are found in the grand book of Ahkam (rulings) God willing"

Imam Al-Qurtubee, in his exegesis, approached, when he explained this verse, the issues of congregation and Imamah (leading worshipers in prayers) perfectly and beneficially may Allah have mercy upon him.