



وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ



*And they have been commanded no more than this: to worship
Allah, offering Him sincere devotion,*

Quran English Translation & Commentary

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Introduction and Summary

This Surah was probably an early Madinah Surah, or possibly a later Makkan Surah.

In subject matter it carries forward the argument of the last Surah. The mystic night of revelation is indeed blessed: but those who reject Truth are impervious to Allah's Message, however clear may be the evidence in support of it.

C.278 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

*But those who reject the light of Truth
Are obstinate. Why should they persist
In evil ways when the Clear Evidence
Has come before? The straight Religion
Is simple: to adore with a pure heart
The God of Truth, to draw nigh to Him
In Prayer sincere, and to serve
Our fellow-creatures in charity and love.
To do aught else is to fall from Grace.
But Faith and Good Life lead straight to the Goal--
The beautiful Gardens of Bliss Eternal,
And the mutual good pleasure of the Soul in her Lord.*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

لَمْ يَكُنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ ...

1. Those who reject (Truth), among the People of the Book,

C6221. The People of the Book immediately referred to are the Jews and the Christians, who had received scriptures in the same line of prophecy in which came our holy Prophet. Their scriptures should have prepared them for the advent of the greatest and last of the Prophets. For the Jewish scriptures promised to the Jews, cousins or brethren to the Arabs, a prophet like Moses:

"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut, 18:15).

And Christ promised a Comforter (John. 14:16; 15:26; and 16:7;

see my n. 5438 to 56:6) almost by name.

The People of the Book fell from the true, straight, and standard religion, into devious ways, and would not come to the true Path until (they said) they were convinced by the arrival of the promised Prophet. But when the promised Prophet came in the person of Muhammad, they rejected him, because they really did not seek for Truth but only followed their own fancies and desires.

... وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ مُنْفَكِينَ ...

and among the Polytheists, were not going to depart (from their ways)

C6222. The Polytheists, the Pagans, had not previously believed in any scriptures. But yet, when clear evidence came to them, they should have believed. Yet they rejected the holy Prophet because they were not really searching for Truth, but were only following their own fancies and desires.

...حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ (١)

until there should come to them Clear Evidence --

C6223. The Clear Evidence was the holy Prophet himself, his life, his personality, and his teaching.

رَسُولٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ يَتْلُو صُحُفًا مُّطَهَّرَةً (٢)

2. A messenger from Allah, rehearsing scriptures kept pure and holy:

C6224. Cf. 2:151.

C6225. Cf. 80:13-16.

فِيهَا كُتُبٌ قَيِّمَةٌ (٣)

3. Wherein are laws (or decrees) right and straight.

C6226. Qayyimah: straight, as opposed to crooked; standard as opposed to irregular; definite and permanent, as opposed to casual or temporary.

Cf. Cf. 9:6; 12:40; etc.

وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ (٤)

4. Nor did the People of the Book make schisms, until after there came to them Clear Evidence.

C6227. The responsibility of the People of the Book is greater than that of Pagans, because the People of the Book had been prepared for the standard and straight Religion by the revelations which they had already received. Yet, when the clear evidence came in Islam, they resisted it.

And what is this standard and straight Religion, free of all ambiguity, and free of all casual rights and ceremonies?

They are summed up in three eternal principles, as explained in the next verse and the next note.

وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا ...

5. And they have been commanded no more than this:

C6228. The three eternal principles of Religion are:

1. sincere devotion to Allah;
2. Prayer and Praise as drawing man nearer to Allah; and
3. the service of Allah's creatures by deeds of practical charity.

... لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ ...

- to worship Allah,
- offering Him sincere devotion,
- being True (in faith);

C6229. Hanif: See n. 134 to 2:135.

... وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَدَلِكِ دِينُ الْقِيَمَةِ (٥)

- to establish regular Prayer;
- and to practice regular Charity;

and that is the Religion **Right and Straight.**

C6230. See n. 6226 above.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ...

6. Those who reject (Truth), among the People of the Book and among the Polytheists, will be in Hell-fire, to dwell therein (for aye).

C6231. To be given the faculty of discrimination between right and wrong, and then to reject truth and right, is the worst folly which a creature endowed with will can commit.

It must necessarily bring its own punishment, whether the creature calls himself one of the children of Abraham or one of the redeemed of Christ, or whether he goes by the mere light of nature and reason as a Pagan. Honour in the sight of Allah is not due to race or colour, but to sincere and righteous conduct (49:13).

...أُولَئِكَ هُمْ شَرُّ الْبَرِيَّةِ (٦)

They are the worst of creatures.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَئِكَ هُمْ خَيْرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ (٧)

7. Those who have faith and do righteous deeds -- they are the best of creatures.

C6232. Contrast this with the preceding verse. Human beings who live a life of faith and good deed justify the purpose of their probation here. They attain the fulfilment of their highest hopes. (R).

جَزَاؤُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ عَدْنٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ...

8. Their reward is with Allah: Gardens of Eternity, Beneath which rivers flow;

... خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ...

They will dwell therein for ever;

... رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ...

Allah well pleased with them, and they with Him:

C6233. The Good Pleasure of Allah is the final Bliss of Salvation.

The good pleasure is mutual; the truly saved is he whose will has become completely identified with Allah's universal will. (R).

... ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ (٨)

all this for such as fear their Lord and Cherisher.

C6234. The fear of Allah is the fear to offend against His holy law, the fear to do anything which is against His holy Will.

Such fear is akin to love; for with it dawns the consciousness of Allah's loving-care for all His creatures.



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