

MESSAGE OF THE QUR'AN

Translation and Brief Elucidation

By

Dr. Israr Ahmad

Al-Baqarah

(Ayaat 243-259)

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ فَقَالَ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ مُوتُوا ۗ ثُمَّ أَحْيَاهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢٤٣﴾

(243) *Have you not seen those who left their homes, being thousands in number, for fear of death? So Allah said to them: "Die"! Then He made them alive. No doubt, Allah is definitely bountiful to the mankind but most of the people do not pay thanks.*

There is a difference of opinion between scholars as to whom this *ayah* refers to. According to *Ibn Kathir*, they were a group of people during the time of the *Children of Israel*, who fled their homes out of the fear of plague, thinking that their flight would save them from death. But death caught them up under Allah's command and they all died in a brief time. Later on, they were raised again to life when their Prophet *Ezekiel* (AS) supplicated for them. [64] On the other hand, *Syed Abul A'la Mawdudi* in his exegesis of the *Qur'an*, gives an allegorical explanation for this *ayah*. According to him, this *ayah* refers to the exodus of the *Children of Israel* when they left Egypt in large numbers. Then Allah (SWT) commanded Prophet *Musa* (AS) to order them to fight and get their holy land back, but they showed cowardice and refused to fight. Therefore, Allah (SWT), as a punishment, let them wander in the desert for forty years, till one full generation of Israelites died and was replaced by a new generation brought up in the tough conditions of the desert life. Then Allah (SWT) gave them victory over their enemies and they conquered Philistine. Their former condition is described as death in this *ayah* and their later development as the restoration of life. [65]

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٤﴾

(244) *And fight in the way of Allah and keep in mind that Allah is All-Hearing, All Knowing.*

In this *ayah*, the believers are commanded to fight for the cause of Allah (SWT) and not abandon Jihad.

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقرضُ اللهُ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضْعِفُهُ لَهٗ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً وَاللهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْسُطُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٤٥﴾

(245) Who will offer Allah a goodly loan, thereupon Allah will increase it for him manifold. And Allah reduces and enhances and unto Him you will be returned.

Goodly Loan signifies whatever one gives selflessly and merely for the pleasure of Allah (SWT). This *ayah* encourages Muslims to spend in the cause of Allah (SWT), whether it is for the propagation of Allah's *Deen*, for Islamic education or for *Jihad*. And Allah (SWT) promises those who give a goodly loan to Him by spending in His way to repay them many times over, provided that their intention was merely to seek the pleasure of Allah (SWT). "And Allah reduces and enhances" i.e. Allah (SWT) is the Sustainer and to restrict or increase the means of subsistence is exclusively in His hands.

الَّذِينَ تَرَى إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَى إِذْ قَالُوا لِنَبِيِّ آلِهِمْ ائْتِنَا مَلِكًا يقاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَالَ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ أَلَّا تُقاتِلُوا قَالُوا وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نُقاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَدْ أُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ دِيَارِنَا وَأَبْنَائِنَا فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ وَاللهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٤٦﴾

(246) Have you not considered the chiefs of the Children of Israel after Moses, when they said to a prophet of theirs: "Appoint for us a king so that we may fight in the cause of Allah". The prophet asked: "Is it possible that if fighting is made incumbent upon you, you refuse to fight"? They replied: "How could we refuse to fight when we have been expelled from our homes along with our children?" But when fighting was made incumbent upon them, they turned their backs except a few of them. And Allah is Acquainted with the unjust.

After leaving Egypt, the Israelites remained on the straight path for a while, but soon afterwards, they started making innovations in their religion and neglecting the law and even took to idolatry. Allah (SWT) sent Prophets to them one after the other, but they rejected them. Then a time came when there was no Prophet between them and because of their malevolence and disobedience, Allah (SWT) made their enemies overwhelm them. Their enemies took many of them as captives and gained possession of a vast area including Egypt and Palestine. Then they prayed to Allah (SWT) to send a Prophet amongst them. At that, Allah (SWT) appointed Samuel (AS) to be their Prophet. The Israelites then asked Samuel (AS) to appoint a king from them so that they could wage *Jihad* against their enemies and take back their land. But when Allah (SWT) appointed a King for them, they refused to fight and only a few of them kept their promise. This particular incident has been mentioned here to forewarn the Muslims in *Madinah* who were also demanding to be allowed to fight the *Quraysh* of *Makkah*, so as to return to their homeland. Allah (SWT) warns them not to be like the Israelites who broke their promise and abandoned *Jihad*.

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا قَالُوا أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِنَ الْمَالِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ ابْتَلَاكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ وَاللهُ يُؤْتِي مَلَكَةً مَّن يَشَاءُ وَاللهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٧﴾

(247) *And their Prophet said to them: "Indeed Allah has appointed for you Saul [66] as a king". They said: "How could he have kingship over us whereas we are more eligible for the kingship than him besides he has not been given abundance in wealth?" The Prophet said: "No doubt Allah has chosen him over you and increased him abundantly in the knowledge and stature. And Allah grants His kingdom to whomsoever He wills. And Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.*

As mentioned in the previous *ayah*, the Israelites asked Samuel (AS) to supplicate his Lord to appoint a king for them so that they could fight under his command. Allah (SWT) appointed *Taalut* (Saul), to whom He had given knowledge and physical strength, to be their king. But the *Children of Israel* refused to accept *Taalut* as their leader as he was not among the descendents of the house of the kings and belonged to a poor family. Allah (SWT) told them that although *Taalut* was not rich, He had chosen him because He had given him more knowledge, strength and patience than others. And Allah (SWT) knows who deserves to be the king and who does not, on account of His infinite Knowledge and Wisdom.

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٤٧﴾

(248) *Moreover their Prophet said to them: "Verily the sign of his kingship is that there will come to you the Ark, wherein lies the tranquility from your Lord and relics which were left by the family of Moses and the family of Aaron, carried by the angels". In fact therein would be definitely a sign for you provided that you are believers.*

The *Taabut* (Ark of the Covenant), which contained remnants of the Tablets given to *Musa* (AS), his staff and the original copy of *Torah* written under his guidance, was considered very sacred by the Israelites. It was so Divinely blessed that whenever it was carried by the Israelites into the battlefield, Allah (SWT) rescued them from their enemies and thus gave them tranquility and peace of mind. When their enemies attacked them, they also took the *Taabut* with them along with the original *Torah*. Afterwards, Prophet Samuel (AS) told the Israelites that Allah (SWT) would give the *Taabut* back to them as a sign for the appointment of Saul as their king. It is said that Allah (SWT) commanded the angels to carry the *Taabut* to the Israelites.

فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنِ اغْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ فَشَرِبُوا مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُم مُّلِقُوا اللَّهَ كَرِهَ مِنْ فِتْنَةٍ قَلِيلَةٌ عَلَبْتَ وَعْتَهُ كَثِيرَةً يَأْذِنُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٢٤٨﴾

(249) *So when Taalut marched forth with the troops, he warned: "Verily Allah is going to test you by a river, so whoever drinks thereof is not of me. But whoever does not drink it to quench his thirst except the one who takes a*

handful with his hand, indeed is of me. Eventually they drank thereof except a few of them. So when he crossed it alongwith those who believed with him, they said: "We have no strength this day to face Goliath and his troops. Those who were sure that they are to meet Allah said: "How many a small army has overcome a large army by Allah's will. And Allah is with the steadfast.

The appointed king *Taalut* put the Israelites to a test as they crossed the river [67] so as to differentiate between those who were the real followers of the path of submission and truth and those who were not. But the Israelites defied the commandment and quenched their thirst freely and only a few of them were found to be faithful. We should also mention here the virtue of the Companions (RAA) of the Prophet (SAW) when they were put to a similar test by Allah (SWT) before the battle of *Badr*. They were given two alternatives at that time as Allah (SWT) says: "Remember, Allah (SWT) promised you victory over one of the two enemy parties and you wished for the one which was unarmed but Allah intended to prove the truth to be true according to His words and to cut off the roots of the unbelievers." [68] The first option was to attack the *Quraysh* caravan led by *Abu Sufyan*, carrying great wealth amounting to 50 thousand gold *Dinars* and guarded by only forty armed men. This was the safest and the most productive option from a worldly point of view. The other alternative was to fight the well-equipped and well-armed *Quraysh* army of 1000 men coming from *Makkah*. Unlike the Israelites, the Companions (RAA) showed the spirit of sacrifice and fidelity at this critical juncture and asked Allah's Messenger (SAW) to lead them to the battlefield, unlike most companions of *Taalut*, who were struck with fear when they saw the size and the strength of the army of Goliath. However, there were some faithful companions of *Taalut* as well, who were determined to face all odds and fight the enemy because they had the faith that Allah (SWT) would help them and strengthen them against their enemy. Indeed He is with the steadfast.

وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا لِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا مَبِئًا وَأَوْيِدْ آفَادَنَا وَمَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٥٠﴾

(250) *And when they advanced to face Goliath and his warriors, they prayed: "Our Lord! "Pour down upon us perseverance, make our steps firm and grant us victory over the disbelieving folk".*

Amongst the army of *Taalut*, those who had faith in Allah (SWT) prayed to Him to make them steadfast and not make them run away from the battlefield.

فَهَزَمُوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ وَاتَّعْتَبَهُ اللَّهُ الْمَلِكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمُ بِبَعْضٍ لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٥١﴾

(251) *So they routed them by Allah's will and Dawood killed Goliath; and Allah gave him kingdom and wisdom and taught him whatever He willed. And were it not for Allah's repelling some people by the others, the earth would have been definitely corrupted; but Allah is full of bounty to all the worlds.*

When the two armies faced each other, Goliath challenged any soldier from the army of King *Taalut* to single combat. Hearing this, the

Israelites were dismayed and daunted. King *Taalut* offered the hand of his daughter in marriage but still no one came forward to fight. Then, to everyone's surprise, a youth stepped forward. A roar of laughter echoed from the enemy's side, and even *Taalut's* men shook their heads. The young man was *Dawood* (David), from the city of *Bethlehem*. As he was the youngest one, he was asked not to fight but help the army in other ways. *Taalut* did not agree at first but when David (AS) persisted, he gave him the permission. When Goliath saw him, he despised him for his youth and laughed at him but to everyone's surprise, *Dawood* (AS) killed him with his slingshot and Allah (SWT) gave the Israelites the glory and honor they had lost for a long time, through this battle. Then as promised, *Taalut* gave his daughter to *Dawood* (AS) and later the kingship was also transferred to him in addition to the Prophethood and wisdom granted to him by Allah (SWT). "And were it not for Allah's repelling some people by the others, the earth would have been definitely corrupted" i.e. when some nations or groups transgress the limits set by Allah (SWT) and make mischief on earth, then He replaces them by others as a counterweight.

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ تَنْزَلُهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٢٥٢﴾

(252) *These are the Ayaat of Allah which We recite to you with a purpose. And of course you are definitely among the Messengers.*

This *ayah* categorically states the truth of the Prophethood of Muhammad (SAW) and what has been revealed to him by Allah (SWT) i.e. the *Qur'an*.

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ وَأَتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيْدَتِ وَإِيْدْنَهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ 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 وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴿٢٥٣﴾

(253) *These Prophets, We have exalted some above others. Among them is he to whom Allah spoke; and He raised some of them in ranks; and We gave Jesus--son of Mary, clear signs and supported him with the Holy Spirit. And had Allah willed, those who came after them would not have fought against one another after the clear signs had come to them; but they differed, so some of them believed and some disbelieved. And had Allah willed, they would not have fought against one another, but Allah does whatever He intends.*

Allah (SWT) honors some Prophets over others but it is not for us to differentiate between any of them and thus argue and dispute with others in favor of one or the other. Instead, it is only up to Allah (SWT) with His infinite knowledge and Wisdom to decide which Prophet is superior, as they are all His creations. Here Allah (SWT) mentions Prophet *Musa* (AS) and *'Isa* (AS) to point out their distinguished positions. *Musa* (AS) was directly addressed by Allah (SWT), while *'Isa* (AS) was aided by miracles and assisted by the Holy Spirit. "And had Allah willed, those who came after them would not have fought against one another after the clear signs had come to them; but they differed, so some of them believed and some disbelieved. And had Allah willed,

they would not have fought against one another.” Allah (SWT) has sent man on earth as a trial and does not force His people to follow a fixed path or impose guidance on any individual. Had He taken away the free will of action from His people, the trial would have been meaningless. Allah (SWT) sent His Messengers to guide the people, whereupon some believed and others rejected. If Allah (SWT) had willed, He could have prevented all His servants from going astray, “but Allah does whatever He intends.”

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعٌ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٌ وَلَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ
الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٥٤﴾

(254) O you who believe! Spend out of what We have provided you before comes a Day wherein there would be no trade, no friendship, and no intercession. And it is the disbelievers who are unjust.

Allah (SWT) commands His servants to strive to spend in His way out of the bounties that He has given them, before the Day of Judgment arrives when no ransom will be accepted and no friendship will benefit them. And those who defy Allah's commandments and reject His Messengers are truly the wrongdoers.

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 مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٢٥٥﴾

(255) Allah! There is no Ilaah (worthy of worship) except Him – the Ever Living, All-Sustaining. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him; to Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Who is the one to intercede with Him except with His permission? He knows whatever is before them and whatever is behind them, and they cannot encompass anything out of His knowledge except that which He wills. His throne extends over the heavens and the earth and to sustain them both does not fatigue Him. And He is the Exalted, the Supreme.

This *ayah* is known as *Ayat-ul-Kursi* i.e. the *ayah* of the Throne. The Prophet (SAW) said that it is the greatest *ayah* of the *Qur'an*. In another *Hadith*, it is narrated by *Ubayy Bin Ka'b* (RAA) that the Prophet (SAW) asked him as to which verse in the Book of Allah (SWT) was the greatest. He said, “Allah and His Messenger know best.” He repeated it several times and then he said, “*Ayat-ul-Kursi*.” The Prophet (SAW) said, “*Congratulations upon your knowledge, Abul-Mundhir. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, it has a tongue and two lips, and it glorifies the Sovereign (i.e. Allah) at the foot of the Throne.*”^[69]

Allah (SWT) is the Only Lord of all creation and has no partner whatsoever. He is Ever Living and sustains the whole universe. Every living creature relies on Him while He, The Most High, is in need of nothing. “*Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him.*” He is aware of everything and nothing is hidden from His knowledge. This is also a refutation of the beliefs of the Christians who think that Allah (SWT)

created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh day. In truth, Allah (SWT) is free of such weaknesses and is neither affected by slumber nor sleep. *“To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth”* i.e. everything in the heavens and the earth and what is in between them is under His authority and control. *“Who is the one to intercede with Him except with His permission?”* i.e. none can intercede or help on behalf of anyone else except if Allah (SWT) permits them. Therefore, neither the Prophets nor the angels or saints will dare to utter a word without the permission of the Lord of the Universe. *“He knows whatever is before them and whatever is behind them”* i.e. nothing is hidden from Allah (SWT) and He has perfect knowledge of all His creations. None of the creatures can attain His knowledge except what He conveys to them, since He is the real source of all knowledge, as the angels said: *“Glory to You,” they replied, “we have no knowledge except what You have taught us: in fact You are the One who is perfect in knowledge and wisdom.”* [70] *“His throne extends over the heavens and the earth.”* The word ‘Kursi’ is translated into Throne as well as Authority. If we take it as authority, it would mean that Allah’s authority extends over the heavens and the earth. On the other hand, most of the *Salaf* [71] have treated the attributes of Allah (SWT) as they are, without knowing the how of it, and thus it would mean that His throne extends over the heavens and the earth. *“And to sustain them both does not fatigue Him”* i.e. the preservation and protection of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them is very easy for Allah (SWT) and it does not burden Him at all *“and He is the Exalted, the Supreme.”*

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ
الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انفصامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥٦﴾

(256) *There is no compulsion in faith. Of course the right path has become distinct from the wrong path. So whoever renounces Taghut and believes in Allah, has indeed grasped a firm handhold that never breaks. And Allah is All-Hearing All-Knowing.*

Believing in Islam depends upon the faith and the will of a person and it would be meaningless to impose it by force. Thus Islam does not force anyone to embrace it; instead, a person has the liberty to live in an Islamic state as a Non-Muslim. However, the Non-Muslims have to comply with and submit to the socio-politico-economic system of that Islamic state. *“Of course the right path has become distinct from the wrong path.”* Allah (SWT) has shown all the evidences and proofs for Islam and thus there should be no doubt in any person’s mind about the truth of Allah’s *Deen* and the falsehood of what opposes it. *“So whoever renounces Taaghut and believes in Allah, has indeed grasped a firm handhold that never breaks.”* The *Qur’an* uses the word *Taaghut* for the forces of evil which rebel against Allah (SWT) i.e. all that turns one away from the path of Allah (SWT) and leads one to evil. This may be a King, a leader or even a whole system, like capitalism or communism, which does not govern

according to the laws legislated by Allah (SWT). Therefore, no one can be a true believer in Allah (SWT) until and unless he denounces *Taaghut*. Such are those who hold firmly to Allah (SWT) and the true religion with the strongest grasp that never breaks.

اللَّهُ وَرَبِّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُمْ مِنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٥٧﴾

(257) *Allah is the Wali of those who believe, He brings them out of the depths of darkness into light. And those who disbelieve, their patrons are the Taghut (forces of evil); they bring them out of light into the depths of darkness, they are the companions of Hellfire; they will be therein 'eternal residents'.*

The Arabic word 'Wali' literally means protector, supporter or helper. A guardian or the one who exercises authority over someone is also called a 'Wali'. Thus here it means that Allah (SWT) is the helper and protector of the believers and an authority over them. He brings them out of the darkness of disbelief and evil into the light of the Truth. In this *ayah*, Allah (SWT) has mentioned the light in the singular form while the darkness in the plural, because disbelief comes in different shades of evil while there is only one truth. While Allah (SWT) is the protector of the believers, the *Taaghut* are the helpers of the disbelievers and bring them out of the light of truth into the darkness of falsehood. Therefore, they are the heirs of Hell and shall abide in it forever.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أُحْيِي وَأُمِيتُ ۗ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٥٨﴾

(258) *Have you not considered the one who argued with Ibrahim about his Lord because Allah had given him the kingdom? When Ibrahim said: "My Lord is the one who gives life and causes death". He replied: "I give life and cause death". Ibrahim said: "Verily Allah causes the sun to rise from the east; just make it rise from the west". Thereupon the unbeliever was confounded; and Allah does not guide the unjust people.*

The person referred to here is King Nimrod of Iraq, who disputed with *Ibrahim* (AS) about the existence of Allah (SWT). Nimrod denied the existence of Allah (SWT) who had given him the kingdom and instead of being grateful to Him, he himself claimed to be the Lord. *Ibrahim* (AS) could not accept that and therefore Nimrod summoned him before himself for judgment and asked him to produce a proof for Allah's existence. When *Ibrahim* (AS) gave the evidence of the existence of Allah (SWT), Nimrod tried to refute it. But after the second argument, he was perplexed and although the truth had become clear to him, he did not accept it because of greed and arrogance, and decreed that *Ibrahim* (AS) be thrown into fire. Indeed, Allah does not guide the evildoers.

أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا ۗ قَالَ أَنَّى يُهْدَىٰ هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بِعَدَمِ مَوْبِقِهَا ۗ فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ

بَعَثَهُ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتَ مِائَةً عَامٍ فَأَنْظِرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ
لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ وَأَنْظِرْ إِلَى حِمَارِكَ وَلِتَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَأَنْظِرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنشِرُهَا كَيْفَ تَكْسُوهَا فَهِيَ عَلَيْهَا
تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٥٩﴾

(259) Or like the one who passed by a town collapsed on its roofs. He wondered: "How will Allah bring it to life after its death. So Allah caused him to die for a hundred years then raised him up. Allah asked: "How long did you remain (dead)?" He replied: "I remained a day or part of a day". Allah said: "Nay, but you remained for a hundred years, so look at your meal and your drink, it is not spoiled. And look at your donkey, and so that We may make you a sign for the people. And look at the bones how do We bring them together and clothe them with flesh. So when it became manifest to him, he said: "I have come to know that Allah is Powerful over everything".

The person referred to here is Prophet *Uzair* (Ezra) (AS) and the city mentioned is Jerusalem. After *Nebuchadnezzar* attacked Jerusalem in the late seventh century B.C, he destroyed the city completely along with the temple of *Suleman* (AS), killed its people and took half of them as prisoners. When Prophet *Uzair* (AS) passed by Jerusalem and saw its destruction, he wondered if the people of this town could ever be brought back to life again. It should be noted that this question did not mean that Prophet *Uzair* (AS) did not believe in the resurrection; he just wanted to see the reality with his own eyes. So Allah (SWT) made him die for a hundred years and then raised him again along with his donkey, so that he could witness how Allah (SWT) brings the dead back to life.

Endnotes

- [64] For details see Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Al-Baqarah (2): 243.
- [65] Towards Understanding the Qur'an by Syed Abul A'la Mawdudi, pg: 186, published by The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, United Kingdom.
- [66] The first king of Israel, called *Taalut* in the Qur'an on account of his height and strength.
- [67] It is the Shari'ah River which flows between Jordan and Palestine according to Ibn Abbas. (At-Tabari 5 : 340)
- [68] Surah Al-Anfaal (8): 7.
- [69] Musnad Ahmed 5: 14.
- [70] Surah Al-Baqarah (2): 32.
- [71] Literally meaning predecessors or early generations, In Islam it means the people of the past, namely the first three generations of pious Muslims during and after the revelation of the Qur'an, i.e. the Companions of the Prophet (SAW) the *Taabi'een* (followers) and the *Taaba' Taabi'een* (followers of the followers).
