

## Chapter 2, Al-Baqarah (The Cow) (part 1 of 5)

**Description:** A guide for the righteous, the consequences of hypocrisy, and rewards for the believers. This is followed by the story of Adam, and reminders for the children of Israel.

By Aisha Stacey (© 2018 IslamReligion.com)

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Holy Quran](#) > [A Summary of the Quranic Chapters](#)

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### Introduction

Chapter two, containing 286 verses, is the longest in the Quran. It was revealed in Medina and the title, The Cow, comes from the story of the cow discussed in verses 67 to 73. Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, said that everything has its peak and the peak of Quran is The Cow. It flows easily



from one subject to another and its primary audience includes the believers, the Jews of Medina and the hypocrites. The Median chapters focus on building a strong Muslim society and this chapter deals with many social, cultural, economic, political and legal issues.

### Verses 1 " 7 A Book of guidance

Chapter 2 is the first of 29 chapters that begin with a combination of Arabic letters. These combinations are formed from fourteen letters and chapter two begins with alif, lam and meem. God did not reveal a specific meaning attached to any of these combinations although over the course of Islamic scholarship theories have been suggested.

This is the book, a guide for those who are God conscious. In the opening chapter God taught us how to ask for guidance and in the second chapter He presents us with a book of guidance. There is no doubt about its origin. From the beginning God stresses the fact that it is only those with God consciousness (taqwa) that will ask for and accept guidance. It is guidance for those who have taqwa, believe in the unseen, establish the prayer, give charity from what God has provided, believe in this revelation and the previous

revelations, and believe in the Hereafter. These people will prosper. Those who disbelieve will not listen to Prophet Muhammad's warning. God has covered their ears, eyes and hearts as a direct result of their arrogance and persistent sinfulness. There is a great punishment awaiting them.

## **Verses 8 " 20 The hypocrites**

There are some who say they believe but they do not. They are trying to deceive God but without knowing it they are only deceiving themselves. Their hearts are diseased, and agonizing treatment awaits them because of their persistent lying. When they are told not to cause corruption they justify their actions by saying that they are only putting things right or trying to make peace. Beware of those who make mischief but do not realize what they are doing. When they are told to believe as the others do, they reply sarcastically referring to the believers as fools. When they are with the believers they pretend to believe but alone with each other they mock. God mocks those who are not rightly guided and allows them to wander blindly. They have purchased error instead of guidance. They will never return to the right way. God presents us with parables in order that we might understand His ways. If we are surrounded by light and guided He can easily remove His guidance. And if we are afraid and sheltering from a storm, God is able to leave us in darkness because He has power over all things.

## **Verses 21 " 29 Worship God Alone**

Humankind, worship God, the one who created you, and those before you, to be conscious of Him. He spread out the earth, built the sky, and sent down rain to provide you with sustenance. Do not set up rivals to God; you know there is nothing comparable to Him. If you have doubts about the revelation then produce your own chapter like it. If you need help then call upon those you have set up as rivals to God. This is not possible, you will never be able to do it, so fear the Hellfire whose fuel is humankind and stones. It is prepared for the unbelievers.

Prophet Muhammad brings good news to those who believe. They will have gardens under which rivers flow. They will be provided with fruit resembling but not the same as those they recognize from earth. They will stay there in the gardens forever with spouses.

God presents us with examples and similitudes; the believers know they are the truth. The disbelievers ask what the examples mean. God causes the rebels to go even further astray. The ones who break their covenants or spread corruption are the losers. Why would you deny God? He gave you life and will cause you to die before bringing you to life again. You will return to Him.

## **Verses 30 " 39 The story of Adam**

When God told the angels He was putting humankind on earth, they asked why He would put those who cause bloodshed and damage there. They pointed out that they (the angels) only celebrate His praises and glorify His name. God answered that He knew things that they did not know.

Adam was taught the names of all things but when God showed the angels they could not tell Him the names of anything. God directed Adam to tell the angels all the names and when he had done so God reminded them that He had said that He knew things that they did not. God then asked the angels to bow down before Adam. They all bowed respectfully except for the disobedient Iblis (Satan) who was arrogant.

Adam was told to live in Paradise with his wife. They were allowed to eat freely and abundantly but ordered not to approach, or eat, from a certain tree. Satan tempted them to disobey and they were expelled from Paradise. God said He would send them all down to earth where they would live for a certain amount of time and some would be enemies to the other. He then spoke with Adam and taught him how to repent. God accepted his repentance and told Adam that although they were expelled, guidance would come, and those that accepted the guidance would have no reason to fear or grieve. But those who continued to disbelieve even after the messengers had come would abide eternally in the Fire.

## Verses 40 " 52 Remember God's favors

The Jews are reminded of their blessings and the pledge they made to God. Believe in this revelation that confirms your own scripture. Do not deny this Quran and do not sell the previous revelations for a petty price. Fear only Me and do not mix truth with falsehood or conceal the truth. Establish the prayer, pay the prescribed alms and bow down with others that bow down. Would you expect others to be righteous yet forget to be righteous yourselves? Think! Those who do not fear God find it difficult to be patient and humble.

Remember God's favor upon you and how He preferred you over all the people in the world. Guard against a Day when no intercession will be accepted. Remember when God saved you from Pharaoh's people, parting the sea for you and drowning Pharaoh's people before your very eyes. And remember the appointment God had with Moses for forty nights. While he was away you started worshipping a calf. You were wrongdoers but still God forgave you. Can you not be grateful?

## Chapter 2, Al-Baqarah (The Cow) (part 2 of 5)

**Description:** Those who break covenants and God's way of dealing with them.

By Aisha Stacey (© 2018 IslamReligion.com)

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Category: [Articles](#) > [The Holy Quran](#) > [A Summary of the Quranic Chapters](#)

## Verses 53 " 62 Covenants with the Children of Israel

And remember when God gave Moses the scripture and the law so that you would be guided. And remember when Moses told his people how wrong they were when they worshipped the calf. Moses advised his people to kill the guilty amongst them and God accepted their repentance. And recall also when you told Moses that you would not accept him unless you saw God. A thunderbolt struck you down dead but God revived you and gave you shade and provided you with manna (provisions) from heaven. In spite of this your forefathers violated God's commandments. By doing so they did not harm God but they did harm themselves.



And remember also when God told you to enter Jerusalem and eat from wherever you found abundance. He reminded you to enter the gate humbly asking for relief from the burden of your sins. Your sins would have been forgiven, and your rewards increased, but the wrongdoers changed the words you were given and God punished you with a scourge from heaven.

Remember when Moses prayed for water and was told to strike a rock with his staff. Twelve springs sprang forth and one was assigned to each tribe. God told you to eat and drink and not to create mischief or spread corruption. You complained to Moses about the food when you were already eating the best food. Go back you were told and you will find what you have asked for, and you found nothing but humiliation, degradation and the wrath of God. This was because you continually rejected the commandments of God and unjustly killed His prophets. This is all because you were disobedient lawbreakers.

Rest assure that the believers and all those who followed their prophets during their times will be successful.

## **Verses 63 " 74 Broken covenants including the sacrifice of the cow**

Remember the covenant, where we made the mountain tower above you; We asked you to hold fast to what We have given you and to remember its teachings. But even when you turned away God's Mercy and Favor was still on you or you would have become the losers. And you knew that those who turned away from the Sabbath were turned into despised apes. It was a deterrent and a lesson for those that were there and those who followed them.

And recall what happened when Moses told his people that God commanded they

slaughter a cow. They accused Moses of ridiculing them, and began to ask details instead of simply following the instruction. Moses told them God said the cow should be deep yellow and pleasing to the eye, but still they persisted in getting more detail. So Moses told them that God said the cow should not have been used to till the soil or water the fields and she should be free from blemishes. They were finally satisfied and slaughtered the cow.

Then a killing that was concealed, along with accusations and denials, was brought to light by God. Therefore, as a sign that God has power over life and death, He ordered them to strike the dead body with a piece of the cow. The body came back to life, but in spite of this sign, their hearts became harder than rocks. There are some rocks from which rivers burst forth, others that split open with water, and there are some that fall down from fear of God. And God knows exactly what you do.

## **Verses 75 " 93 Revelation rejected**

Believers! Do you still hope that some of the People of the Book will believe in what you say even though they have already heard the words of God and perverted them? When they are with the believers they say that they are believers too. But when they are alone they say do not tell them what we know in case they use it against us before God. Do they really believe that God does not know what they conceal and what they reveal?

Some of them are illiterate and they do not know their own revelation. They follow their own desires and wishful thinking. Woe to those who write the "scripture" with their own hands, and then claim that it is from God in order to make some small gain. Woe to them, for what they have written and for what they have earned. They believe the Fire will not touch them except for a few days. Did God make this promise? God does not break his covenants, so are you saying things that you have no evidence for?

Whoever earns evil and is surrounded by his sin will abide in the Fire, forever. On the other hand, those who believe and do good deeds will be in Paradise, forever. God took a covenant from the Children of Israel to worship none but He (God), and to be good to parents and family, and to orphans and the destitute; to speak mildly and kindly, and to establish the prayer, and pay the obligatory charity. All but a few turned away and broke the covenant.

And there was yet another covenant, to not shed blood amongst one another or to drive one another from their homes. They acknowledged it at the time but now they do these things and help one another in sin and aggression. They also trade those they expelled unlawfully for ransom. Do they believe in some parts of the revelation but not all parts? What punishment do they deserve, disgrace in this world and severe punishment on the Day of Judgement? They trade this life for the Hereafter, so their punishment will not be lightened.

We gave Moses the Torah and then sent Jesus with clear signs and supported him with Gabriel, the Holy Spirit. God asks the Jews, why did you call some of the prophets imposters and kill others? They answered that their hearts are sealed. God has cursed

them for their disbelief. A Book (Quran) has come confirming the revelations before it but they reject it. They sell their souls for a small price. A humiliating torment awaits them.

When they are told to believe in God's revelations they say we believe in what was revealed to us but not in what came after it, even though it confirms their own scriptures. If you truly believed your own scriptures, why did you kill your own prophets? Moses came to you but as soon as he was out of sight you worshipped the calf. Remember the covenant when the mountain was lifted over their heads? Listen to what We say, God said, but they answered we hear and disobey. That is how much they loved the calf. If you are real believers, why does faith cause you to do such evil?

## Chapter 2, Al-Baqarah (The Cow) (part 3 of 5)

**Description:** The Jews continue to break covenants and prove their faithlessness. Abraham's religion and the direction of the prayer are discussed.

By Aisha Stacey (© 2018 IslamReligion.com)

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### Verses 94 " 110 Faithlessness

If you (Jews) really believe that Paradise is for you alone why don't you wish for death? They will not because they are well aware of the consequences of their behavior. God understands how the disbelievers' minds work. They are greedy for life, wishing for a thousand years, but not even that will save them from the promised punishment.



The enemies of angel Gabriel should know that he brought the Quran to Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. Whoever is an enemy to God, His angels, and His messengers should know that God is the enemy of such unbelievers. Those who refuse to believe the clear messages defy God. Every covenant was thrown aside.

When the Messenger confirmed their scriptures, they hid their books as if they were

nothing. They accepted what the followers of Satan falsely attributed to Solomon. In Babylon the angels Harut and Marut taught the people witchcraft after warning them not to disbelieve. They learned from them how to cause discord between a man and his wife although they could harm no one except with God's permission. What they learned was harmful and of no benefit in the Hereafter. Being mindful of God would have been a better choice.

When speaking to Prophet Muhammad do not use ambiguous words in order to abuse him. The disbelievers do not want you receive any good from God, but God chooses whoever He pleases. God does not abrogate a verse or cause one to be forgotten except that He sends one better or similar. God has dominion over the heavens and the earth and He is the only Protector or Helper. Do you intend to persistently question Prophet Muhammad the way Prophet Moses was questioned? Whoever exchanges belief for unbelief is lost. Many Jews and Christians wish they could turn you back from your belief; forgive them and put up with their behavior until God gives His command.[\[1\]](#) Establish the prayer and pay your obligatory charity. Whatever good deeds you send forth for yourselves, you will certainly find its reward with God. God has power over all things and sees everything.

## **Verses 111 " 121 Religious prejudices**

Saying no one will enter Paradise unless they are a Christian or a Jew is just wishful thinking without evidence. Any good person who submits to God (i.e. follows Islam) will have nothing to fear. The Jews, the Christians, and the pagan Arabs all accuse each other but God will decide between them.

The most unjust are those who prevent the mention of God's name and try to destroy the mosques. They will have disgrace in this world and punishment in the Hereafter. Both the east and the west belong to God so no matter where you turn you will find His Face. They say that God has a son! Exalted is He above all they falsely attribute to Him. Everything belongs to Him, He only has to say "Be," and it is. They ask why God does not speak to them, but there are clear signs for those who have faith. Prophet Muhammad was sent with the truth to convey the message, and he is not responsible for the inhabitants of the Fire.

The Jews and Christians will never be satisfied until you follow them, but if you turn from the truth you will lose. Those who disbelieve are losers, but some who follow the previous scriptures recognize the truth.

## **Verses 122 " 132 Abraham the leader**

Remember, Children of Israel, how God favoured you over others, and fear the Day when there will be no help of any kind. When Abraham was tested and fulfilled God's commands, He made him a leader. Abraham asked about his descendants and God said only those who did not do evil would be leaders.

Remember also when the Kabah was a sanctuary and God instructed Abraham and Ishmael to cleanse it for those going around it in circles. Abraham asked God to secure

and provide for those who believed in God. God answered that He would provide for the disbelievers also but that their enjoyment would be short and then they would be subjected to the torment of the Fire.

Abraham and Ishmael renewed the foundations of the Kabah and asked God to accept it from them. They asked God to make them and their descendants Muslims. And Muhammad was appointed from among them. Only a fool would not accept the religion of Abraham. God chose Abraham to be a Muslim and he left this legacy to his sons. And Jacob commanded his sons to devote themselves to God, warning them not to die unless they are Muslims.

## **Verses 133 " 145 The religion of Abraham**

The Jews were not there when Jacob was dying. He asked his sons what they intended to worship after he was gone. The sons answered that they would worship his God and the God of Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael. That community passed away and they will be answerable for their own deeds. When they ask you to be Jews or Christians, answer that you follow the religion of Abraham. The believers should answer that they believe in God and what was sent down to all the prophets without making a distinction between them. Believers should say God ordained our religion.

Muhammad is told to tell the disbelievers not dispute about God and that all will be held accountable to Him. Are you saying that Abraham and his descendants were Jews or Christians? Who would know better, you or God? Who could be more wicked than the person who hides the truth from the previous scriptures attesting to the nature of God's religion and the coming of Prophet Muhammad. This nation has passed on and only they will be questioned about their deeds.

Foolish people will ask what caused the change in the prayer direction. All directions belong to God, and He changed the direction only to determine who the true followers of Prophet Muhammad were. It was a hard test. Many times God watched Prophet Muhammad turn his face towards heaven; now the faces will turn in a direction that will please him, towards the Kabah. The Jews and Christians will not accept your direction. Do not yield to their desires or you will be among the wrong doers.

## **Verses 146 " 154 A new direction**

Those who received the scriptures before you conceal their knowledge. The truth is from God, do not doubt it. Each religious community has its own direction (to face), so compete with each other to do good deeds, and God will bring you all together on the Day of Judgment. When you pray, turn towards the Holy Kabah in Mecca. Prophet Muhammad recites the Quran and teaches you wisdom. Remember Me (God), be grateful and do not deny Me, and I will remember you. Seek help through patience and prayer because God is with the patient. Do not say that those who die in God's cause are dead; they are alive, but you are unable to perceive it.

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Endnotes:

[1] The provision of this verse (2:109) was abrogated by verse 9:29.

## Chapter 2, Al-Baqarah (The Cow) (part 4 of 5)

**Description:** The believers will be tested, characteristics of righteousness are explained, and God begins to set down rules.

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### Verses 155 - 167 Punishment for disbelief

You will be tested with fear, famine and losses, but bear it patiently to find blessings from God. The hills in the sacred mosque in Mecca, Safa and Marwah, are two of God's signs, so perform the major and minor pilgrimage rites. Walk between the hills without fear. God rejects those who hide truth and guidance unless they repent.



Hell is for the disbelievers. There is only One God and there is no deity worthy of worship except Him. God's creation of the universe with all its wonders is a sign for people who think. However, some still worship other than God. If only they could see their false gods on the Day of Judgement disowning and distancing themselves from their followers. They will ask for one last chance, but God will show them the fruits of their actions and they will feel bitter regret.

### Verses 168 " 177 Righteousness explained

Oh humankind. Eat from what is lawful and good, and do not follow your enemy Satan. He leads to evil and immorality and encourages you to speak about God without wisdom or knowledge. When asked to follow God they refuse and say that they will follow what their forefathers did. This makes no sense. Calling to disbelievers is like calling to the deaf, dumb and blind. They are incapable of understanding. Eat from the good and lawful things provided and give thanks to God. Do not eat dead meat, blood, pig meat, or meat that has been slaughtered in the name of something other than God. If you are compelled

to do so out of necessity it is not a sin.

Those who conceal part of God's Book or sell His revelations for material gain will only consume fire and on the Day of Judgment God will not speak to them. They exchange guidance for error and forgiveness for torment. God has sent the Book but some still try to deviate. Turning your faces one way or the other is not righteousness. True righteousness is to believe in God, the Day of Judgment, the angels, the scriptures and the prophets. The righteous person gives in charity, despite the fact that they love their wealth and riches. And they give to relatives, orphans, the needy, the travellers, to the destitute, and to free those in bondage. They establish the prayer, pay the obligatory charity, keep their promises and are steadfast in misfortune. They are truthful and pious.

## **Verses 178 " 195 Rules for the believers**

O you who believe. Fair retribution is prescribed in cases of murder; the murderer will be put to death and no one else in his place. If the culprit is pardoned be fair and pay what is due. This process is a mercy from God. Exceeding the limits will result in a painful punishment. When death approaches a bequest for parents and near relatives is incumbent upon you.<sup>[1]</sup> If a bequest is changed it is a sin on the one who changes it, but there is no blame on one who suspects an error and brings about a settlement.

The Quran was revealed in Ramadan, a book to guide all of mankind. Fast in this month, but if you are ill or on a journey, then you should make up the lost days later. God does not want you to undergo hardship but He does want you to glorify Him and show gratefulness. God is near and responds to those who call Him. Therefore be obedient and put your trust in God.

It is permissible to have sexual relations with your lawful partners the night before fasting. You are like clothing for each other. God knows it was difficult for you to abstain so He made this easy for you. Eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct from the black thread of night, then fast until nightfall. Do not have sexual relations during your retreat in the mosques in the last ten days of Ramadan. Do not overstep the set limits.

Do not consume one another's wealth unjustly or in bribery. When they ask about the crescent moons say that they are to determine periods of time and the time of the pilgrimage. Do not enter houses from the back doors; enter through the proper doors and fear God.

Fight those who fight you but do not transgress the boundaries.<sup>[2]</sup> Kill them wherever you encounter them and drive them out of the places from which they drove you. Killing is bad but creating mischief is worse. Fight until there is no more disorder and God's religion reigns supreme. If they cease hostilities then stop and do not fight again unless they transgress the boundaries. Fighting in the sacred month is forbidden but if anyone commits aggression against you it is permissible to retaliate.

## Verses 196 -203 The pilgrimage

Complete the pilgrimages, taking care to follow the rules set out by God. The major pilgrimage Hajj is in the well-known months and those who undertake it must refrain from sexual relations, obscene language, and fighting or bickering. Take provisions but piety is the best provision. There is no harm in doing business. When you return from Arafah stop at Muzdalifah and then depart from the place where all the people depart. And after fulfilling your duties remember God more passionately than how you used to remember your forefathers before Islam.

Those who only pray for good in this world will have no share in the Hereafter, but those who ask for good in this world and the next, and seek protection from the Fire will achieve what they have worked for. Remember God on the days after the sacrifice. You can leave after two days or stay on.

## Verses 204 " 212 Embrace Islam and reject Satan

Among the people there are some hypocrites who impress you with their views and call upon God to witness what is in their hearts, but when away from you they causes mischief and destruction, and do not take heed when told to fear God. Hell will be their abode. On the other hand, there are some who give their lives to seek God's pleasure. God is affectionate to his devotees. O believers embrace Islam completely and do not follow in the footsteps of Satan, your avowed enemy. If you deviate after clear proofs have come to you, then know that no one can escape His punishment or defeat Him. Are they expecting God to come down? All matters will be presented to Him.

Ask the Jews about the clear cut signs they were given. Anyone who changes God's revelations should understand that God's retribution will be severe. The life of this world is charming to the disbelievers but those who fear God will rank above them on the Day of Judgement. God gives provision to whom He wills without limit.

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Endnotes:

[1] This injunction was later abrogated when God legislated fixed shares of the inheritance for rightful recipients.

[2] Verse 190 was the first verse revealed about Jihad and was supplemented by Chapter 9:36.

## Chapter 2, Al-Baqarah (The Cow) (part 5 of 5)

**Description:** Stories, explanations, rules and supplications.

By Aisha Stacey (© 2018 IslamReligion.com)

## Verses 213 " 242 Instructions for life

Humankind was one nation with one religion but soon people invented their own religions. Thus God sent prophets and messengers with good news, warnings, and guidance with which to settle disputes. They started more disputes because of rivalry. God guided those who believed; He guides whoever He wants.



Do you think you will enter Paradise without trials, even though you have seen what happened in the past? They were afflicted with poverty and hardship until even their messengers cried out to God. God's help is close at hand.

When they ask what they should spend in charity tell them to spend on their parents and relatives, and orphans, the needy and the traveler. God knows the good you do. Fighting is obligatory even though you might dislike it. Perhaps you dislike things that are good for you and love things that are bad for you. God knows, you do not.

Fighting in the sacred month and creating mischief in the sacred mosque are offences greater than killing.<sup>[1]</sup> When they ask about charity tell them to spend whatever they can. God makes His revelations clear so that you may reflect. Deal justly with orphans. Do not marry a polytheistic person until they believe. A believing slave is better than a polytheist free person. The polytheists invite you to the Hellfire while God invites you to Paradise and forgiveness.

Do not have sexual intercourse when your wife is menstruating; wait until she becomes pure. God loves those who are clean. Have sexual intercourse in any way that is pleasing to you but do not contravene God's commandments. Take care of your future. Do not use God's name in oaths or as an excuse. You are not blamed for what is unintentional.

Those who renounce sexual relations with their wives have a limitation of four months. After that is reconciliation or divorce. Divorced women must wait three menstrual periods before remarrying and must not conceal a pregnancy. In that period they can reconcile. Wives have rights similar to their obligations but husbands have a degree of responsibility above them. There are only two revocable divorces. The third is irrevocable. Do not take back any gifts unless you make a mutual arrangement. After the third divorce a couple

cannot marry unless the wife marries and is divorced by another man. During the divorce act with dignity and honour and do not cause trouble; God sees everything.

Breastfeeding is for two years if it is desirable; maintenance is the responsibility of the father. No person should suffer on account of their child. Treat wet nurses in an honourable manner. A widow must wait four months and ten days before she remarries. It is permissible to propose marriage during the waiting period, however, do not confirm the marriage until after. A divorce is acceptable before consummation or the dowry is settled but pay them something; and if the dowry is settled then pay half, unless the woman waives it, full is more honourable. Guard your regular prayers especially the middle one.

If you fear danger, pray while walking or riding. Maintain widows for one year and do not expel them from their homes.[\[2\]](#) Treat divorced women in a fair manner.

## **Verses 243 " 260 Stories and reflections**

Reflect upon the people who fled their homes fearing death. God caused them to die and then return to life. Fight in God's cause. Give God a good loan and He will increase it many times. Reflect on what happened after the death of Moses. The Jews were ordered to fight in God's cause yet most refused. Saul was chosen by God to be king but many questioned his worthiness. Their Prophet said that the Ark of the Covenant will come to you as a sign of his kingship. At the river most of them failed God's test. But the believers among them knew that often God supported small groups. By God's will David killed Goliath and was given Saul's kingdom. God repelled one set of people by the might of another.

Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, is one of the messengers, and some messengers are exalted above others. God spoke directly to some. Jesus was given clear proofs and was supported by the Holy Spirit. If God had willed it some groups of people would not have fought each other. Give charity from what God has provided before the Day comes when there will be no bargaining or intercession.

God, there is no deity except Him. He does not sleep, and everything belongs to Him. There is no intercession without His permission, and His knowledge includes every aspect of the past, present and future. His knowledge is incomprehensible except for what He reveals. His throne is vaster than the heavens and the earth and guarding them does not exert Him. He is the Most High.

There is no compulsion in religion. Whoever rejects the forces of Satan has a firm handhold that will not break. God leads from darkness to light but Satan leads from light to darkness. Reflect upon Nimrod and Abraham. Nimrod considered himself a god but Abraham pointed out his error. And think about Prophet Ezra who died for 100 years. Ezra saw God's power over life and death. And consider when God showed Abraham how to bring four birds back to life.

## **Verses 261 " 283 Charity and contracts**

Those who spend to please God will be rewarded many times. Those who do not remind people of their benevolence or follow their charitable deeds with hurtful words

will see their reward. God reminds of this fact with parables and cautions us not to make our charity worthless. Give from the best things that you have not things that are no longer useful to you.

Satan threatens you with poverty and tries to make you commit sin, while God offers His forgiveness and bounties. God gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever is given wisdom is certainly blessed with a lot of good. God knows your charity and your vows. Public charity is good but private charity is better. This will quash some of your sins. Prophet Muhammad is not responsible for guidance, God guides whom He wills. Charity to please God will be to your advantage. It will be paid back in full. Give to those who are in need while engaged in God's work. You can recognize them by their appearance, and God knows what you spend. Those who give charity openly and secretly have nothing to fear. Trading is lawful but interest is forbidden, it leads to the Hellfire. Interest is cursed, charity is blessed. Write contracts when lending to each other, and let there be witnesses. This is more just but unnecessary for small business transactions. On a journey pledges can replace contracts. Do not conceal testimony.

## **Verses 284 " 286 Faith and supplication**

Everything belongs to God. You will be asked to account for everything you do. God will pardon or punish as He pleases. He has complete control. Prophet Muhammad and the believers believe what has been revealed by Him. They believe in God, His angels, His books, and all of His prophets, equally. They hear and obey. God does not burden anyone with more than they can bear. Each person will bear the consequences of their actions. The believers ask God to forgive their forgetfulness and mistakes, to not burden them like those who came before them, and to not lay on them a burden they are unable to bear. They ask for forgiveness, mercy, and help against the unbelievers.

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Endnotes:

[1] The provision in this verses (2:17) was abrogated by verse 9:36.

[2] The provisions in verse 2:240 are abrogated by verse 4:12

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