

I seek refuge in Allah from Satan The accursed

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Al-Baqarah Surah Verses: 284,285 & 286

<p>284. To Allah belongeth all that is In the heavens and on earth. whether ye Show what is In your minds or conceal it, Allah calleth you to account for it. He forgiveth whom He pleaseth, and punisheth whom He pleaseth, for Allah hath power over all things.</p>	<p>لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۗ وَاِنْ تُبَدُّواْ مَا فِىْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَوْ تُخْفُوْهُ يُحٰسِبِكُمْ بِهٖ اللّٰهُ ۗ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٢٨٤﴾</p>
<p>285. The Messenger believeth In what hath been revealed to Him from His Lord, As do the men of Faith. Each one (of them) believeth In Allah, His angels, His books, and His apostles. "We make no distinction (They say) between one and another of His apostles." and They say: "We hear, and we obey: (We seek) Thy forgiveness, Our Lord, and to Thee is the end of all journeys."</p>	<p>اٰمَنَ الرَّسُوْلُ بِمَا اُنزِلَ اِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَّبِّهٖ ۗ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۗ كُلُّ اٰمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَرُسُلِهٖ ۗ وَكُتِبَ عَلَيْهِ ۗ وَرُسُلِهٖ ۗ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ اَحَدٍ مِّنْ رُّسُلِهٖ ۗ وَقَالُوْا سَبِعْنَا وَاَطَعْنَا ۗ غُفِرَ اِنَّكَ رَبَّنَا وَاِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿٢٨٥﴾</p>
<p>286. On no soul doth Allah place a burden greater than it can bear. it gets every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns. (Pray:) "Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or fall into error; Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that which Thou Didst Lay on those before us; Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Blot out Our sins, and grant us Forgiveness. have Mercy on us. Thou art Our Protector; help us against those who stand against faith."</p>	<p>لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللّٰهُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۗ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اٰكْتَسَبَتْ ۗ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا اِنْ نَسِئْنَا اَوْ اَخْطَاْنَا ۗ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا اِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلٰى الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا ۗ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهٖ ۗ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا ۗ وَارْحَمْنَا ۗ اَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلٰى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٨٦﴾</p>

Explanation

"The Messenger has believed in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and the believers as well. All have believed in Allah, and His angels and His Books, and His Messengers. "We make no division between any of His Messengers," and they have said: "We have listened, and obeyed. Our Lord, Your pardon! And to You is the return."

Allah does not obligate anyone beyond his capacity. For him is what he has earned, and on him what he has incurred.

"Our Lord, do not hold us accountable, if we forget or make a mistake and, Our Lord, do not place on us a burden such as You have placed on those before us. And our Lord, do not make us bear that for which we have no strength. And pardon us. And grant us forgiveness. And have mercy on us. You are our Lord. Help us, then, against the disbelieving people."

Commentary

These are the last two verses of Surah al-Baqarah. Great merits have been attributed to these two verses in authentic ahadith. The Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam: Peace be upon him has said that one who recites these two verses during the night, they will be sufficient for him.

As narrated by Sayyidna Ibn 'Abbas Radhi-Allahu Anh: Allah be pleased with him, the Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam: Peace be upon him said that Allah Almighty has sent forth these two verses out of the treasures of Paradise and the 'Rahman had already written them by His own hand two thousand years earlier than the creation of all things and beings. One who is able to recite them after the Salah of 'Isha', they will stand for Tahajjud in his case. As it appears in the Mustadrak of al-Hakim and in Bayhaqi, the Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam: Peace be upon him said that Allah Almighty has concluded Surah al-Baqarah with these two verses, which have been given to me in His grace from out of the special treasure that lies under the 'Arsh' (Divine Throne). Therefore, you should make special effort to learn these verses, and at the same time, teach your women and children how to recite them. This is why Sayyidna 'Umar and Sayyidna 'Ali (R.A) said that they thought that anybody who has any sense in him would never go to sleep without having recited these two verses.

Meaning-wise, these verses have many special features. One of the distinct ones is that they come at the end of Surah al-Baqarah where most of the injunctions of Shari'ah appear briefly, or in detail, such as, those dealing with the articles of faith, modes of worship, mutual dealings, morals and social living etc. Here, the first of the two verses opens with words of praise for the Muslims who are true and obedient, those who said yes with all their heart to all injunctions ordained by Allah, and were all set to carry them out. In addition to being an assertion of Allah's infinite mercy, the second verse also answers the doubt which started bothering the noble Companions when verse 284, the one preceding these two, was revealed. The words of the said verses, as mentioned earlier briefly, were: , that is, whether you manifest that which is in your hearts, or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it. Here the verse was actually referring to the accounting of whatever one does with his or her choice and volition. Unintentional thoughts and errors were just not included under its purview.

However, the words of the Qur'an were general because of which people surmised that man will be taken to account even for thoughts that entered his mind without his intention. Nervously excited, the noble Companion presented themselves before the Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam: Peace be upon him and said: 'Ya Rasul Allah, till now we thought that we shall be called to account for only those deeds that we do with our will and choice, and we shall not be called to account for thoughts that cross our minds involuntarily. But this verse seems to tell us that every thought that enters our minds will be subject to accounting. This way it is extremely difficult to escape punishment.' Although, the Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam: Peace be upon him knew the correct intended meaning of the verse but he, in view of the generality of its words, did not elect to say anything on his own. Instead, he waited for the Wahy (revelation) and instructed

the Companions that they should obey whatever Allah Almighty ordains for them. It may be easy or difficult to carry out, but it is not the way of a true Muslim to show the slightest of hesitation in accepting Allah's command when it comes. As soon as you hear the command of Allah, say: , that is, 'We have listened, and obeyed. Our Lord, Your pardon! And to You is the return.'

The noble Companions did exactly what they were told by the Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam: Peace be upon him, although their minds were still ticking with the apprehension that building a security shield against involuntary intrusions of thoughts was enormously difficult indeed! Thereupon, Allah Almighty revealed these last two verses of Surah al-Baqarah. Here the first one praises Muslims while the other gives a correct explanation of the verse that created doubt in the minds of the noble Companions. Now let us look at the words of the first verse. These are: The Messenger has believed in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and the believers as well. All have believed in Allah and His angels and His Books and His Messengers. *"We make no division between any of His Messengers," and they have said: "We have listened, and obeyed. Our Lord, Your pardon! And to You is the return."*

The first seven words of this verse admire the Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam: Peace be upon him. It may be noted that the verse does not address him by his name, but, by calling him 'Rasul', his honour and dignity have been made clear. The word, 'the believers' follows immediately after that. It means that just as the Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam: Peace be upon him firmly believes in the revelation (Wahy) from Allah, so do the true Muslims in general. The style chosen for this sentence is also worth consideration. The major part has been used to describe the state of the 'iman (belief) of the Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam: Peace be upon him, then, the 'iman (belief) of the general Muslims has been described separately. This indicates that, although the Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam: Peace be upon him and all Muslims share in the wealth of 'iman as such, still there is a great difference between the two in terms of the relative degrees of 'iman. The knowledge of the Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam: Peace be upon him is based on seeing and hearing while the knowledge of other Muslims takes the form of 'iman bil ghayb or 'believing without seeing' as based on the 'ru'yah' or 'seeing' of the Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam: Peace be upon him.

After that come details of the 'iman (belief) which was common between the Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam: Peace be upon him and the Muslims in general. This 'iman consisted of the belief that Allah Almighty does exist and that He is One and that He is endued with all the perfect attributes, and that there are angels, and that all Scriptures and all Messengers sent by Allah are true.

After that it was clearly stressed that the 'believers' of this ummah (Muslim community) will do nothing as was done by past communities when they planted seeds of discord among messengers of Allah by accepting some as prophets and by denying that status to others. The Jews accepted that Sayyidna Musa (A.S) was a prophet, the Christians accepted that Sayyidna 'Isa (A.S) was a prophet, but that the Last of the prophets, Sayyidna Muhammad Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam: Peace be upon him was a prophet was not accepted by them.

Praised here is the distinction of this ummah which is made of people who do not reject any prophet. This is followed by words of admiration for what the noble Companions had said when so directed by the Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam: Peace be upon him: We have listened, and obeyed. Our Lord, Your pardon! And to You is the return.

After that comes the second verse where the doubt, which could have risen during the comprehension of some sentences in the previous verse, has been removed in a style that is very special. It will be recalled that the question was as to how one would escape punishment if thoughts concealed in hearts were also made subject to accounting. It was said: 'Allah burdens not anyone beyond his or her capacity.' Therefore, thoughts that enter the heart without one's intention and control and are not translated into action, stand all excused in the sight of Allah Almighty. Deeds, that are undertaken with choice and volition will be the only ones apprehended and called to account.

A little detail will show that there is an outward aspect of human deeds which concerns what is done with the hand, head, eye, tongue and other parts of the body. This is further divided into two kinds. The first reflects what is done with choice and volition. This is voluntary, such as, to speak by choice or to beat somebody by choice. The second kind is involuntary, that which just issues forth without choice or volition, for instance, saying something other than what one actually intended to say, or a palsied hand moving unintentionally caused pain to somebody. Here everyone knows that accounting and retribution, reward and punishment are particularly related to voluntary deeds. As far as non-voluntary deeds are concerned man is neither obligated nor constrained therein, and certainly, there is no thawab (reward) or 'adhab (punishment) on them.

Similarly, the deeds relating to one's heart are also of two kinds. The first one is voluntary, for instance, the belief in kufr and shirk, which one has implanted firmly in one's heart with intention and choice, or the arrogance one assumes as a result of conscious and wilful self-pride, or the making of firm resolution to start drinking. The second kind is the non-voluntary, for instance, the entry of some evil thought in one's heart without volition and intention. Here too, the accounting, the reckoning and the reprehensibility covers voluntary deeds only, and does not cover non-voluntary deeds.

By this explanation given by the Qur'an itself, peace was restored in the hearts of the noble Companions. They were satisfied that there was no accounting, reckoning, punishment or reward on non-voluntary thoughts. The same subject has been further clarified towards the end by saying: , that is, man is rewarded for what he intends to do and is punished for what he elects to do.

But it should be borne in mind that the drive of the meaning of this verse is that, one will initially face direct reward or punishment for what is done with intention and volition. However, the indirect coming of reward or punishment after any such deed which was not intended, is not contrary to this. This provides an answer to the doubt that there are times when man faces reward or punishment even without intention and volition. In this context, several other verses of the Qur'an and many reports from ahadith prove that one who does something good which persuades others to act similarly, then its reward will continue reaching the original doer of the good deed as long as the later followers of the original deed continue with

their good deeds. Similar is the case with one who gives currency to an evil way; he too will be incurring its curse as the original innovator of this evil way when later people follow him, and keep getting involved with the sin for all times to come.

Similarly, narrations in hadith prove that one can transmit the reward of one's good deeds to any other person. It is clear that in all these situations, man is receiving reward or punishment without intention and volition.

Here is an answer to this doubt. It is obvious that this reward and punishment did not reach a person directly, but it reached him through the medium of another person. In addition to that, one's own act and choice do surely play a role in making another person a medium of thawab for oneself. The reason is that whoever adopts a good or evil way initiated by someone, then in his doing, there certainly is a role played by the voluntary act of the original person, even if he did not intend to release such particular effect. Similar is the case of a person who does his isal al-thawab (the prayer for transmittal of reward) for somebody only when he has done him some favour. In view of this, the said reward and punishment of somebody else is, in reality, the reward and punishment of one's own deeds.

The noble Qur'an, towards the far end, teaches Muslims to make a special du'a or prayer in which forgiveness has been sought on commission of some act because of forgetfulness or neglect or mistake. It was said: Our Lord, do not hold us accountable, if we forget or make a mistake.

Then it was further said: Our Lord, do not place on us a burden such as You have placed on those before us. And our Lord, do not make us bear that for which we have no strength. Indicated here are the severe restrictions placed on the Bani Isra'il (Israelites), such as, a piece of cloth could not be made fully pure unless cut or burnt, or that repentance could not be accepted without killing. Alternately, it could mean that punishment should not visit us as it visited the Bani Isra'il following their evil deeds.

In short, Allah Almighty bestowed His best when He promised the acceptance of all these prayers through His Rasul, the last among the prophets, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.