

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(19) *"O people of the Book! Now has come to you Our Messenger (SAW) making (things) clear unto you, after a break in Messengers, lest you say: "There came unto us no bringer of glad tidings and no Warner" But now has come unto you a bringer of glad tidings and a Warner."* There has not been a time period when Allah (SWT) did not send His Messengers to mankind up till Prophet Jesus (AS). Then He sent His Last Prophet (SAW), after whom there will be no Prophet or Messenger, who came after a long break in the series of Prophets between him and Jesus (AS). This interval between the time of Jesus (AS) and the time of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is known as *Fatrah*. Allah (SWT) sent His Final Prophet (SAW), so that on the *Day of Judgment* people should not be able to give an excuse for their not following Islamic Monotheism and say that no one came to give us good news or warn us. Thus the Final Messenger (SAW) came to them as one who brought good tidings for the believers and as a Warner from evil. *"And Allah is Able to do all things."* Allah has power all things.

(20) *"And (remember) when Moses (AS) said to his people: "O my people! Remember the Favor of Allah (SWT) to you, when He made Prophets among you, made you kings, and gave you what He had not given to any other among the mankind." "* There was a continuous chain of Prophets sent to the *Children of Israel*. He bestowed on them His blessings, made them kings and gave them kingdoms which were never given to anyone of His creatures but they neglected His Prophets and rejected them. Thus because of their evil deeds and disobedience, there came a time when there was no Prophet among them and Allah (SWT) made their enemies overwhelm them, who captured many of them, killed them and took possession of their lands.

(21) *"O my people! Enter the holy land which Allah (SWT) has assigned to you, and turn not back (in flight) for then you will be returned as losers." "* Allah (SWT) directed His Prophet Moses (AS) to lead the Children of Israel to the Promised Land i.e. Palestine, which had been promised to Abraham (AS) as a land in which the pious and Allah-fearing of his offspring would live and uphold Allah's law. Thus Moses (AS) commanded His people to enter the holy land and recapture

it from their enemies; otherwise they themselves will be the losers in the sight of Allah (SWT).

(22) *"They said: "O Moses (AS)! In it are a people of great strength, and we shall never enter it, till they leave it; when they leave, then we will enter."* The Children of Israel refused to enter the Promised Land and gave excuses that our enemy is strong and vicious and more powerful than us. And therefore we will never be able to defeat them and we will only enter this city, when they leave.

(23) *"Two Allah-fearing men among them on whom Allah (SWT) had bestowed His Grace said: "Assault them through the gate, for when you are in, victory will be yours, and put your trust in Allah (SWT) if you are believers indeed."* The Children of Israel were six thousand strong but still there was no one amongst them who agreed to fight for Allah's cause except for two pious, Allah-fearing men. They were Joshua and Caleb. They encouraged their people to go forward and fight in Allah's cause, and they said to them that if you obey Allah (SWT) and follow His commandments then surely He will help you and make you victorious over your enemies.

(24) *"They said: "O Moses (AS)! We shall never enter it as long as they are there. So go you and your Lord and fight, we are sitting right here."* The Children of Israel showed cowardice and refused to fight their enemy. They rebelled against Allah's commandments and committed blasphemy to such an extent that they replied to Moses (AS) that you and your Lord fight yourself with the enemies and we are not going to join you.

(25) *"He said: "O my Lord! I have power only over myself and my brother, so separate us from these rebellious people!"* After the Children of Israel disobeyed Allah's commandments and refused to fight, Moses (AS) invoked Allah (SWT) against them and supplicated to Him to separate him and his brother Aaron (AS) from these disobedient people.

(26) *"Allah (SWT) said: "Therefore it is forbidden to them for forty years; in distraction they will wander through the land. So be not sorrowful over these rebellious people.""* This refers to the exodus of the *Children of Israel*. As a punishment for their cowardice Allah (SWT) let them wander homeless 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.

(27) *"And recite to them (the Jews) the story of the two sons of Adam in truth; when each offered a sacrifice, it was accepted from the one but not from the other. The latter said to the former: "I will surely kill you." The former said: "Verily, Allah accepts only from those who are pious.""* This story is about the two sons of Adam (AS) and Eve, Abel and his brother Cain. Eve used to give birth each time to twins: a boy and a girl. Allah (SWT) revealed to Adam that he should marry each son to the twin sister of the other. Adam (AS) instructed his children according to Allah's (SWT) command, but Cain was displeased with the partner chosen for him, for Abel's twin-sister was not as beautiful as his own. This attraction caused Cain to envy his brother Abel and he rebelled against Allah's (SWT) command by refusing to accept his father's advice. Then to settle the dispute Allah (SWT) commanded Prophet Adam (AS) that each of his son should offer a sacrifice, and he whose offering was accepted he will marry with his choice. Abel offered his best camel, while Cain offered his worst grain. His sacrifice was not accepted by Allah (SWT) because of his disobedience to his father and the insincerity in his offering. This enraged Cain even further and he threatened to kill his brother. But Abel advised his brother that instead of threatening him he should look into his own mistakes as to why Allah (SWT) did not accept his sacrifice.

(28) *"If you do stretch your hand against me to kill me, I shall never stretch my hand against you to kill you, for I fear Allah (SWT); the Lord of the Worlds.""* Abel was an Allah-fearing person and very obedient to His commandments. Thus he refused to fight Cain even after he had threatened him because he did not want to hurt his brother and attain Allah's displeasure.

(29) *"Verily, I intend to let you draw my sin on yourself as well as yours, then you will be one of the dwellers of the Fire, and that is the recompense of the wrongdoers."* Abel reminded his brother of the consequences of the evil of killing an innocent person. He warned Cain that if he kills him then he will not only bear the burden of the sin of the murder but he will also be burdened by his sins, and thus will become an inmate of Hellfire, which is the punishment for the wrong-doers.

(30) *"So the soul (self) of the other encouraged him to the murder of his brother; he murdered him and became one of the losers."* i.e. his *Nafs* (inner-self) prompted him to kill his brother making it seem fair to him, thus he killed him and in the process ruined his life.

(31) *"Then Allah (SWT) sent a crow who scratched the ground to show him to hide the dead body of his brother. He said: "Woe to me! Am I not even able to be as this crow and to hide the dead body of my brother?" Then he became one of those who regretted."* After killing his brother, Cain did not know what to do with his corpse. He carried it on his back wandering from place to place with his conscience saddled with guilt. Then, Allah (SWT) sent two ravens that began fighting, causing the death of one. The victorious bird used its beak and claws to dig a hole in the ground, rolled its victim into it and then covered it. After Cain saw this, he felt ashamed and regretted of what he had done. He then buried his brother in the sand and thus it became the first burial of man.

(32) *"Because of that We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind."* Allah (SWT) decreed for the *Children of Israel* that whoever kills an innocent soul will be as if he has killed the whole of humanity except for the punishment of murder i.e. *Qisas*¹, or making mischief in land. Likewise, Allah (SWT) ordained for them that whoever saved a life, it is as if he saved the whole humanity. It is stated in *Talmud*² that *"He who destroys one soul of a human being, the Scripture considers him as if he destroyed a whole world, and him who saves one soul of Israel, the Scripture considers him as if he saved a*

whole world..."³ In Islam also, the protection of one soul from being killed is regarded equal to giving life to all humankind. Similarly, the killing of a soul without any justification is equal to the killing of the entire human race, as stated in this *ayah*. Further Allah (SWT) states: *"And indeed, there came to them Our Messengers with clear proofs, evidences, and signs, even then after that many of them continued to exceed the limits in the land!."* Allah (SWT) sent His Messengers to the *Children of Israel* one after the other. They came with teachings and clear evidences of truth, but still they transgressed the limits set by Allah (SWT) by committing major sins and doing oppression unjustly.

(33) *"The recompense of those who wage war against Allah (SWT) and His Messenger and do mischief in the land is only that they shall be killed or crucified or their hands and their feet be cut off on the opposite sides, or be exiled from the land. That is their disgrace in this world, and a great torment is their lots in the Hereafter."* This *ayah* mentions the punishments for those who oppose Allah's commandments and His Messenger (SAW) i.e. commit treason against an Islamic state, thus making mischief on land. These four punishments are applied according to the gravity of the crime committed viz. execution for committing murder or becoming an apostate, crucifixion, cutting hands and feet from opposite sides for the crime of theft and exile from the land. Those who commit these crimes will be humiliated in this world by these punishments and they will suffer a grievous punishment in the Hereafter.

(34) *"Except for those who repent before you overpower them; in that case, know that Allah (SWT) is OftForgiving, Most Merciful."* This *ayah* refers to idolators that rebel against an Islamic state and make mischief in land. It means that the punishment for such people who repent afterwards is annulled provided they repent before they are caught by the authorities. Surely Allah (SWT) is Forgiving and Merciful and He forgives all sins of those who repent.

(35) *"O you who believe! Do your duty to Allah (SWT) and fear Him. Seek the means of approach to Him."* In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) commands His servants to obey Him sincerely and avoid everything which is against His Will or law and seek the means of nearness to Him. Allah (SWT) has prescribed for us a number of

types of means to approach Him⁴. The best of which is to call upon Allah (SWT) by means of His perfect Names such as a Muslim saying in his supplication: “O Allah (SWT) I ask you by your Mercy...I ask you being the Most Gracious...” etc. The proof of this is in the following *ayah*: “*The most beautiful names belong to Allah (SWT), so call on Him by them...*”⁵ “*And strive hard in His Cause as much as you can. So that you may be successful.*” Then Allah (SWT) encourages His servants to do *Jihad* in His cause and fight against the enemies of Islam and promises eternal bliss and happiness for those who obey His commandments.

(36) “*Verily, those who disbelieve, if they had all that is in the earth, and as much again therewith to ransom themselves thereby from the torment on the Day of Resurrection, it would never be accepted of them, and theirs would be a painful torment.*” This is the actual reality of this world, which is close to nothing as compared to the blessings of the Hereafter. Thus on the *Day of Judgment*, no amount of ransom will be accepted from those who rejected faith in order to save themselves from the grievous punishment of the Hellfire, even if they bring this earth full of gold or twice as much.

(37) “*They will long to get out of the Fire, but they will never get out therefrom, and theirs will be a lasting torment.*” i.e. they will never be able to escape the torment of Hellfire and they will live there forever.

(38) “*Cut off the hand of the thief, male or female, as a recompense for that which they committed, an exemplary punishment from Allah (SWT).*” An Islamic state has an obligation to protect the five essentials of life and ensure that they remain safe viz. religion, life, honor, mental health and one’s property. Thus Islam protects these essentials of life by means of the punishments which Allah (SWT) has prescribed to attain peace and security. This *ayah* describes one of these punishments prescribed for theft in Islam i.e. to cut off the right hand of the thief, whether male or female, from the wrist joint, so as to deter others from committing such crimes. “*And Allah (SWT) is All-Powerful, All-Wise.*” i.e. Allah (SWT) is All-Powerful to punish whoever He wants in whatever way

He Wills, and He is also All-Wise i.e. He knows what is better for His servants.

(39) *"But whosoever repents after his crime and does righteous good deeds, then verily, Allah (SWT) will pardon him. Verily, Allah (SWT) is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."* Sometimes a Muslim may fall into that which Allah (SWT) has forbidden. But Allah (SWT) says that He is Kind and Merciful to His servants. Thus if anyone repents sincerely after he has committed the crime, Allah (SWT) will accept his repentance and forgive him.

(40) *"Don't you know that to Allah (SWT) belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth! He punishes whom He wills and He forgives whom He wills. And Allah (SWT) is Able to do all things."* i.e. Allah (SWT) owns everything and He does what He Wills for His creatures and no one can question His decision or judgment.

(41) *"O Messenger (SAW)! Let not those who plung headlong into unbelief grieve you, of such who say: "We believe" with their mouths but their hearts have no faith."* This *ayah* refers to the hypocrites who embrace Islam but soon after deviate from belief in Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW). They only pretend to be faithful but in reality they are the bitter enemies of Islam and its followers. *"And of the Jews are men who listen much and eagerly to lies, listen to others who have not come to you."* i.e. there are those amongst *Jews* who are eager to catch up any lies against Prophet Muhammad (SAW). They also attend his gatherings and listen to what he says, so that they can convey it to his enemies who cannot attend Prophet's (SAW) gatherings or come near him. *"They change the words from their places; they say, "If you are given this, take it, but if you are not given this, then beware!"* i.e. they distort their books and alter its meanings so that they can hide its knowledge from their people. Further, whenever they brought their disputes to Prophet Muhammad (SAW), they would decide beforehand that they would accept Prophet's (SAW) decision if it is in their favor, otherwise they will not accept it and walk away. *"And whomsoever Allah (SWT) wants to put in trial; you can do nothing for him against Allah (SWT). Those are the ones whose hearts Allah (SWT) does not want to purify; for them there is a disgrace in this world, and in the Hereafter a great*

torment." i.e. whoever Allah (SWT) intends to put on trial and error then there is none who can save him from His punishment, in this world and in the Hereafter.

(42) *"(They like to) listen to falsehood, to devour anything forbidden."* i.e. they eagerly listen and indulge in falsehood so that they can eat what is forbidden for them e.g. usury and bribes. *"So if they come to you, either judge between them, or turn away from them. If you turn away from them, they cannot hurt you in the least. And if you judge, judge with justice between them. Verily, Allah (SWT) loves those who act justly."* When the *Jews* came to the Prophet (SAW) for a judgment, they did not seek the truth and justice but hoped that some partiality will be shown in favor of them. Therefore Allah (SWT) says to His Prophet (SAW) that there is no harm on you O'Muhammad (SAW) if you do not want to adjudicate between them because of their behavior and partiality, but if you do act as judge, then judge between them in fairness, for Allah (SWT) loves those who judge with fairness.

(43) *"But how do they come to you for judgement while they have the Torah, in which is the (plain) judgement of Allah (SWT); yet even after that, they turn away. For they are not (really) believers."* It was reported that this *ayah* was revealed regarding some *Jews* who came to the Prophet (SAW) for a judgment concerning a man and a women amongst them who committed adultery. The Prophet (SAW) said to them: *"What would you do in this case"* They said: *"We would humiliate and expose them."* The Prophet recited: *"Bring here the Torah and recite it, if you are truthful."* So they brought a man who was blind in one eye and who was respected among them and said to him, *"Read (from the Torah)."* So he read until he reached a certain verse and then covered it with his hand. He was told, *"Remove your hand,"* and it was the verse about stoning. So that man said, *"O Muhammad (SAW)! This is the verse about stoning, and we had hid its knowledge among us."* So the Messenger ordered that the two adulterers be stoned, and they were stoned to death.⁶

(44) *“Verily, We did send down the Torah, therein was guidance and light, by which the Prophets, who submitted themselves to Allah's Will, judged the Jews. And the rabbis and the priests for to them was entrusted the protection of Allah's Book, and they were witnesses thereto.”* In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) praises the *Torah* which He revealed to His Prophet Moses (AS), for the *Children of Israel*. It contained the guidance and the light from Allah (SWT) to take them out of the darkness of ignorance and show them the right path. All the Prophets sent to the *Children of Israel* followed the laws of *Torah* by which they judged the *Jews* and they did not deviate from the straight path i.e. they submitted themselves to the Will of their Lord. Not only the Prophets but also the Rabbis and their Jurists judged according to the laws of *Torah*. They were entrusted with its protection and to be the witnesses of its truth and to testify that they had made it known to the people. Then Allah (SWT) said: *“Therefore fear not men but fear Me and sell not My revelations for a miserable price.”* Allah (SWT) commanded the *Children of Israel* to fear Him alone and not to distort or conceal what He has revealed to them in fear of other men or to suit their own desires. *“And whosoever does not judge by what Allah (SWT) has revealed, such are the disbelievers.”* Along with the People of the Book, this *ayah* also applies to those Muslims who do not follow the *Qur'an* and judge their matters according to it. There is not a single Islamic country on the face of this earth today that judges or decides its matters solely according to what Allah (SWT) has revealed. This *ayah* concludes that those who judge or rule according to what Allah (SWT) has revealed are Muslims and those who do not judge or rule according to what Allah (SWT) has revealed and distort Allah's revelations then they are *Kafiroon* (disbelievers).

(45) *“And We ordained therein for them: "Life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and for wounds equal punishment.”* This *ayah* indicates that Allah (SWT) ordained the law of retribution in the *Torah* as it is in Islam, but the *Jews* defied the ruling and refused to accept the divine commandments. *“But if anyone remits the retaliation by way of charity, it shall be for him an expiation.”* i.e. if the victim forgives the aggressor and does not retaliate then it becomes an expiation for his sins and he will have his reward with Allah (SWT). *“And*

whosoever does not judge by that which Allah (SWT) has revealed, such are the wrongdoers." Here this *ayah* refers to the *Jews* who do not follow Allah's commandments and give false judgments. They only follow their lusts and desires and do not judge their matters according to what Allah (SWT) has revealed to His Messenger (SAW). Thus Allah (SWT) says that they are unjust and evildoers (*Zalimoon*).

(46) *"And in their footsteps, We sent Jesus (AS), son of Mary (AS), confirming the Torah that had come before him, and We gave him the Injeel, in which was guidance and light and confirmation of the Torah that had come before it, a guidance and an admonition for the pious."* In the continuous chain of the Prophets sent to the *Children of Israel*, Jesus (AS), son of Mary (AS) was the last one. He was sent to confirm and verify the truth of *Torah* and rule by its laws. Allah (SWT) gave him *Injeel* which also contained guidance and light to direct people towards the right path. It was a guidance and admonition for the pious and the righteous and it came verifying the truth of the previous Scriptures, like the *Torah*. Jesus (AS) said that he did not come to abrogate the *Torah*⁷, but to complete it by going to the spirit of its substance and to get at its essence.

(47) *"Let the people of the Injeel judge by what Allah has revealed therein."* The *Christians* are being warned to judge according to what Allah (SWT) revealed to them, and believe in all that is present therein including the coming of the Allah's Last Messenger (SAW) with His Last and final revelation i.e. the *Qur'an*. *"And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such are the transgressors."* Here this *ayah* specifically refers to the *Christians* who rebelled against and abandoned the truth that Allah (SWT) revealed to them through His Prophet Jesus (AS). But this *ayah* does not only apply to the *Christians* or the *Jews*, but to any one, a Muslim or a non-Muslim who does not submit himself totally to the authority of Allah (SWT) and abandons the truth. He becomes a disbeliever, a wrongdoer or a transgressor (*Fasiq*) according to the degree of his disobedience.

(48) *"And We have sent down to you the Book in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it and to safeguard it."* Allah (SWT) revealed this *Qur'an* to Prophet

Muhammad (SAW) with the truth that it is indeed coming from Him. It came confirming the truth of all the earlier scriptures, guarding them in truth i.e. preserving them from distortion and corruption, for it has within it the teachings of all the previous Books. *“So judge between them by what Allah (SWT) has revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging away from the truth that has come to you.”* Allah (SWT) commands His Prophet (SAW) to judge and rule according to the laws prescribed in the Holy *Qur’an* and do not judge according to the desires of these ignorant people, thus diverging away from the truth. *“To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way.”* Allah (SWT) ordained a law and a way of life for every Messenger and his nation, and when human thought and intellect progressed from infancy to maturity reaching its climax, He revealed His final law and way of life for all mankind to come, to His Last and Final Messenger, Muhammad (SAW). *“If Allah (SWT) willed, He would have made you one nation, but that (He) may test you in what He has given you.”* i.e. if Allah (SWT) had Willed He would have made all mankind into a single nation with one language, one religion and one law. But in His perfect Wisdom He divided mankind into different nations and gave them different laws to govern at their given time so as to test their abilities and obedience to Him in everyone’s own capacity. He will thus reward them or punish them accordingly. *“So strive as in a race in good deeds. The return of you (all) is to Allah (SWT); then He will inform you about that in which you used to differ.”* Allah (SWT) encourages His servants to vie with one another in doing virtuous and righteous deeds. And commands them to be always mindful of the fact that your final return is to Allah (SWT), who will show you the truth of those matters in which you disputed.

(49) *“And so judge between them by what Allah (SWT) has revealed and follow not their vain desires”* This *ayah* is repeated here to emphasize the importance of this command. *“take heed lest they turn you far away from some of that which Allah (SWT) has sent down to you.”* i.e. beware of the *Jews* who are always in search of an opportunity to deceive you and wish to turn you away from the truth. *“And if they turn away, then know that Allah's Will is to punish them for some sins of theirs.”* i.e. if they disbelieve then know that it is Allah's Will to deviate them from the

truth and scourge them for some of their sins. *“And truly, most of men are transgressors.”* i.e. majority of the people in the world have rebelled against Allah's obedience and thus deviated from the truth.

(50) *“Do they then seek the judgment of (the Days of) Ignorance.”* This *ayah* applies to all those who seek judgment from laws other than what Allah (SWT) has prescribed for His servants, defy His commandments and instead follow their own desires and lusts. In other words every judgment which does not come from the Book of Allah (SWT) or the Sunnah of His Messenger (SAW) is of the *Jahiliyyah* (days of pagan ignorance). *“And who is better in judgment than Allah (SWT) for a people who have firm Faith.”* Allah (SWT) is the Creator of mankind and He has the perfect knowledge of everything. Therefore He knows best what is beneficial for them and what is harmful to them.

Foot Notes

[1] Execution for committing deliberate murder.

[2] The collection of ancient rabbinic writings consisting of the Mishnah, text of the Oral Law, and the Gemara, a commentary on the Mishnah, constituting the basis of religious authority in Orthodox Judaism.

[3] Talmud, Mishnah Tractate Sanhedrin 4:5 (37a).

URL: www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Talmud/sanhedrin4.html

[4] Cf. Tawassul; Its types and its rulings. By Sheikh Naasiruddeen al-Albanee.

[5] Surah Al-A'raf (7) : 180.

[6] Sahih Al-Bukhari : 4556.

[7] Gospel of Matthew 5 : 17.