

(Note: Wherever the word “you” or “your” is singular and refers to one human being, it is printed with an italic y, as in: you. Wherever such a word refers to God, the letter y is printed in capital, as in: You.)

For Fast 3 – August 24

*This instalment is dedicated to the memory of Brigadier **Nasir Saeed**, who died in Canada a few hours ago. I spent more than a month in his constant company in the summer of 1996 and found him to be a devoted Ahmadi and perfect gentleman who did so much work for Islam quietly. May Allah grant him forgiveness and protection, and admit him into His mercy to join His most righteous servants, Ameen.*

Chapter 2

- 256 There is no compulsion in religion — the right way is indeed clearly distinct from error. So whoever disbelieves in the devil and believes in Allah, he indeed lays hold on the firmest handle which shall never break. And Allah is Hearing, Knowing.
- 257 Allah is the Friend of those who believe — He brings them out of darkness into light. And those who disbelieve, their friends are the devils who take them out of light into darkness. They are the companions of the Fire; in it they abide.

Notes:

V. 256 — According to this verse, no compulsion must be applied to any human being to make him or her accept Islam. The reason is that the “right way” has been made distinct from the way of error for the human mind to understand. Therefore, the proper development of a person lies in him having the freedom to exercise his faculties to understand and accept the right way. Accepting through coercion does not bring those faculties into action.

There is a common misinterpretation that the principle of “no compulsion in religion” applies only to non-Muslims who are being invited to Islam, but does not apply to anyone within the fold of Islam, so that a Muslim is not free to leave Islam. This is an entirely baseless conception. This principle applies to all.

“...disbelieves in the devil and believes in Allah” — The term ‘belief’ here means ‘putting a belief into action’, and not just ‘holding a belief’ that something exists. Muslims affirm that the devil exists, but are required to ‘disbelieve’ in him, that is, not to follow him.

V. 257 — It is a person himself who decides whom to befriend. Those who make Allah their Friend are, step by step, brought into more and more light. Those who choose to make devils their friends are led away from any light that they were in.

Having declared that there is no compulsion in religion, the next section (verses 258-260) gives examples of ‘how dead nations are brought to life’; in other words, how to convince the deniers as to the truth of religion. **We look briefly at verse 260 below.**

260 And when Abraham said, My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead,
He said: Do you not believe? He said: Yes, but that my heart may be at ease.
He said: Then take four birds, then tame them to incline to you, then place on
every mountain a part of them, then call them, they will come to you flying;
and know that Allah is Mighty, Wise.

Notes:

To revive a dead people with spiritual truth, from which they are running away like birds startled by people, they have to be tamed as one tames birds, so that instead of being repelled away from the truth they are attracted towards it even from a great distance. This verse has a deep relationship with the mission of the Ahmadiyya Movement. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad wrote of his famous vision, in *Izala Auham*, in which he saw himself making a speech in London, as a result of which he caught many **birds** sitting on trees. He interpreted the “birds” as people in the West who would embrace Islam through his teachings. His mission is precisely to **tame** these “birds” so that they are not frightened of Islam, but come flying to it. It is more than ever easily seen now that the great need is to remove the fear of Islam.

This is also related to the Holy Prophet Muhammad’s vision in which he saw *Dajjal* going around the Ka’ba with Jesus. Hazrat Mirza sahib writes about it that his task, as Promised Messiah, is to bring the *Dajjal* to perform the Hajj. Hajj is the occasion on which people from all four directions converge on one centre.

Also it is interesting to note that Hazrat Mirza sahib writes: when I have brought *Dajjal* to perform the Hajj, that will be the time when I will perform the Hajj.