

For Fast 4

Chapter 2

- 249** ... they said: We have today no power against Goliath and his forces. Those who were sure that they would meet their Lord said: How often has a small group overcome a numerous army by Allah's permission! And Allah is with the steadfast.
- 250** And when they went out against Goliath and his forces, they said: Our Lord, pour out patience on us and make our steps firm and help us against the disbelieving people.
- 251** So they put them to flight by Allah's permission. And David killed Goliath, and Allah gave him kingdom and wisdom, and taught him of what He pleased. ...

Note: The prayer in verse 250, by the prophet Saul and his followers, is for success in a noble cause against enormous odds. As a result of their patience and belief, David won against Goliath and it became proverbial to speak of a 'David vs. Goliath' contest. But this prayer is much broader than asking for help on the field of battle, and applies to other fields of conflict and debate as well. The "disbelieving people" here does not only mean unbelievers in Islam, but also the forces of unbelief within our own minds and souls.

- 286** Allah does not impose on any soul a duty beyond its ability. To its benefit is what (good) it earns, and to its detriment is what (evil) it works.

Our Lord, do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake. Our Lord, do not lay on us a burden as You did lay on those before us. Our Lord, do not impose on us (afflictions) which we have not the strength to bear.

And pardon us! And grant us protection! And have mercy on us! You are our Patron, so grant us victory over the disbelieving people.

Note: This is one of the most important and comprehensive prayers in the Quran. It begins by reassuring us that the obligations required of us are not beyond our capabilities. Then a simple rule is taught that we gain or lose according to the good or wrong we do within our capabilities.

The first prayer, "do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake", is to ask for forgiveness for sins actual committed. Corresponding to it, is the prayer "pardon us".

The second prayer, "do not lay on us a burden as You did lay on those before us", is due to *fear* of doing wrong. Corresponding to it, is the prayer "grant us protection", meaning, protect us from wrongdoing in future.

The third prayer, "do not impose on us (afflictions) which we have not the strength to bear", is for making it bearable for us to carry out God's commands and thus advancing in doing good. Corresponding to it, is the prayer "have mercy on us".

The "victory over the disbelieving people" is not for any military victory, as these prayers clearly show. It is for convincing others of the truth of Islam, as well as victory over the disbelief within our own minds and souls.
