

## Fast 11

“And when Allah took a covenant from those who were given the Book: You shall explain it to people and shall not hide it. But they threw it behind their backs **and took a small price for it**. And evil is what they buy.” — Ch. 3, v. 187.

“...So do not fear the people and fear Me, and **do not take a small price for My messages...**” — Ch. 5, v. 44.

“And **do not take a small price for Allah’s covenant**. Surely what is with Allah is better for you, if only you knew!” — Ch. 16, v. 95.

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*Notes:* The description, “Those who were given the Book”, in the 1st verse, does not only apply to followers of earlier religions, as generally thought, but also applies to Muslims. The 2nd verse, addressing Jewish religious leaders, also contains a lesson for Muslim *ulama*. The 3rd verse above directly addresses Muslims.

It was also a duty imposed on Muslims regarding the Quran that “You shall explain it to people and shall not hide it”. But, after the early centuries of Islam, Muslims failed in this duty of explaining the Quran to people. To study Islam they only went as far as to rely on the books of Islamic law and commentaries of the Quran, much of whose contents became inapplicable with the passage of time. Muslim *ulama* started regarding these later sources as infallible and permanent, so that they did not even think there was any need to study or teach the Quran directly. They hardly produced any translations of the Quran till more than a thousand years of the history of Islam had elapsed. This amounted to keeping the Quran hidden from people.

“But they threw it behind their backs” — Most Muslims consider it a great sacrilege to turn your back on a copy of the Quran, even by accident. Unfortunately, that is the only sense in which their leaders don’t turn their backs on the Quran. They turn their backs on its teachings for the sake of taking “a small price for it”. On payment, or for some worldly consideration, the *ulama* would issue *fatwas* opposed to the Quran. They would do this for ordinary Muslim individuals as well as for kings, rulers and governments. The declaration of groups of Muslims as *kafir* is a prime example of this “taking a small price”. The teachings of the Quran are thrown behind the back and rulings are given to gain popularity with the masses or to remain in political power. They encourage masses to follow various baseless rituals in the name of Islam because they earn their livelihood from those practices.

“So do not fear the people and fear Me” (2nd verse above) — These instructions given to Jewish religious leaders apply to Muslims also. They often do not want to correct some popularly prevailing wrong notion or social evil or malpractice because they are afraid of people. Today we see examples that some distorted fact is presented by some Muslims on the Internet, apparently proving the truth of Islam. It is accepted unquestioningly and spreads like wildfire. Yet very few Muslims have the courage to stand up and challenge it because of fear of people’s reaction. Religious leaders in Pakistan know that, for example, the so-called “blasphemy law” is not Islamic, and not to be found in the Quran or Hadith. But they dare not say it, and in fact encourage the masses to continue believing that it is prescribed by Islam.

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“Those who conceal anything of the Book that Allah has revealed and take for it a small price, they eat nothing but fire into their bellies, and Allah will not speak to them on the day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them; and for them is a painful punishment.” — Ch. 2, v. 174.

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*Notes:* This verse warns of how serious it is to conceal what God has revealed and to “take a small price” for it. This is done by the religious leaders for their own ends.

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### **Inspiring sayings about the Quran**

Maulana Muhammad Ali wrote in an article:

“So just as it is the object of your life to acquire the knowledge of the Holy Quran for the purpose of spreading it in the world for its guidance, likewise praying to God to ask for help and for strength to do this work should also be considered as the purpose of your life.” — *A Mighty Striving*, page 282.