

Fast 16: God as the only and ultimate Judge of who is on the right path and who is not

- It is only God Who best knows who is good and who is bad in reality:

“(30) ...Surely your Lord knows best him who strays from His path and He knows best him who goes aright.

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اهْتَدَى ﴿٣٠﴾

(31) ... that He may reward those who do evil for what they do, and reward those who do good with goodness.

لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسَاءُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا بِالْحُسْنَى ﴿٣١﴾

(32) Those who avoid the great sins and the indecencies, but the passing idea — surely your Lord is Liberal in forgiving. He knows you best when He brings you forth from the earth and when you are embryos in the wombs of your mothers; so do not ascribe purity to yourselves. He knows him best who guards against evil.” (53:30–32)

الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ ۗ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذْ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذْ أَنْتُمْ أَجِنَّةٌ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ ۗ فَلَا تُزَكُّوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ۗ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقَى ﴿٣٢﴾

Verse 31 tells us that God “rewards” people **according to their actions, whoever they may be**. Evil-doers are “rewarded” according to what they do, and those who do good are rewarded with good. It may also mean that the result of doing evil is that the doer is bolstered to do more evil, and the result of doing good is that the doer is encouraged to do more good.

But who are the doers of good? Are they perfect and do they never stumble? Verse 32 says that these are the ones who avoid the major bad deeds. There is no list of “major sins” and “minor sins”, as is commonly thought. Any bad deed is major when it is committed, and it is minor when it is a thought in the mind, or what is called “a passing idea” here. Allah is “liberal in forgiving”, or these words may be translated as “vastly forgiving”. So He forgives a passing thought or a small step, which is not followed up, and does not treat it as an evil deed.

Then it is stated that God knows best how man, as a species, has been created, and what any individual is like genetically. A person has strengths and weaknesses both as a human being, and in his or her individual capacity. So: “Do not ascribe purity to yourselves” — make no claim that you are pure, nor think it. Only those can progress who remain aware of their shortcomings and try to remove them. It also prevents you

from looking down upon others. It is reiterated here at the end, as was said at the beginning of the extract quoted above, that it is God Who best knows who is exerting himself to guard against committing evil.

- Similarly, Muslims are told by Allah to say to those whose beliefs are in contradiction and opposition to Muslim beliefs:

“And surely we or you are on a right way or in manifest error.

Say: You will not be asked of what we are guilty, nor shall we be asked of what you do.

Say: Our Lord will gather us together, then He will judge between us with **truth**. And He is the **Best Judge**, the **Knower**.” (34:24–26)

وَإِنَّا أَوْ إِيَّاكُمْ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى أَوْ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾

قُلْ لَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا أَجْرَمْنَا وَلَا نُسْأَلُ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

قُلْ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا رَبُّنَا ثُمَّ يَفْتَحُ بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ ۗ وَهُوَ الْفَتَّارُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٢٦﴾

One of us is right and the other is wrong. If we are wrong, God will not hold you responsible, and if you are wrong we are not accountable for it. It is only God Who, in a future life, will judge between us. And His judgment, unlike ours, will be based entirely on truth, justice and knowledge.

- Even when preaching to others, a Muslim must bear in mind that only Allah knows who is straying and who is on the right path:

“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the best manner. Surely your Lord knows best him who strays from His path, and He knows best those who go aright.” (16:125)

أَدْعُ إِلَىٰ سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ ۚ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بَالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾

Note here that a Muslim must call others to Islam by means of “wisdom”, in other words, giving intelligent and rational arguments that can convince someone’s mind, and through “goodly exhortation”, that is, giving advice on how a person can solve his problems by following the message of Islam. The argument must be conducted “in the best manner”, with politeness, respect, and a sincere motive.