

Fast 14: Another verse sheds more light

- There is a verse in the Quran which parallels the passage from ch. 2 that we have been discussing. That verse is as follows:

“**But the firm in knowledge among them and the believers** believe in what has been revealed to you (O Prophet) and what was revealed before you, and those who keep up prayer and give the due charity and the believers in Allah and the Last Day — these it is to whom We shall give a mighty reward.” — ch. 4, v. 162

لَكِنَّ الرَّاٰسِخُوْنَ فِي الْعِلْمِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَ
الْمُقِيمِيْنَ الصَّلَاةَ وَالْمُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ
بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أُولَٰئِكَ سَنُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا



For comparison, we repeat below the translation from our earlier passage:

“This Book, in which there is no doubt, is a guide to those who keep their duty, who believe in the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend (on good works) out of what We have given them, and who believe in what has been revealed to you (O Prophet) and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are sure. These are on a right course from their Lord and these it is that are successful.” — ch. 2, v. 2–5

- The *muttaqeen* (“those who keep their duty”) of the passage from ch. 2 are called “the firm in knowledge among them and the believers” in ch. 4, v. 162. Then the two quotations go on to list the same points of belief and practice.
- Who are “the firm in knowledge among them”? In the verses immediately before this verse, the wrongdoings of the Israelites are listed, starting from the time of Moses (the founder of their religious law), through the times of the prophets who appeared among them after him, to the time of Jesus. These include: demanding that Moses show them God face to face, and worshipping the golden calf (v. 153), “breaking their covenant ... killing the prophets unjustly” (v. 155), “uttering against Mary a grievous slander” (v. 156), and claiming to have killed Jesus (v. 157). Certain other sins of theirs are mentioned as well, such as “their hindering people from Allah’s way” (v. 160), “their taking usury — though indeed they were forbidden it — and their devouring the property of people falsely” (v. 161).
- After all this condemnation, we have v. 162 which tells us that “the firm in knowledge among them”, that is, the knowledgeable ones among the Jews, believe in the fundamentals of Islam, and it classifies them along with the Muslims by saying: “the firm in knowledge among them *and the believers*”. It means that even from among a

nation which opposed its own prophets, and committed many other violations of religion, those of them *who have a firm hold on knowledge* will testify to the truth of Islam.

- Firstly, this illustrates the generous, broad-minded and forgiving nature of the teachings of the Quran. It does not condemn any nation as a whole, on the basis of its descent or religion, but only those within it who do wrong, and it recognizes that there are people within it who would do good.
- Secondly, this shows that knowledge can lead a wrongdoing people towards truth and goodness, such is the power of knowledge.
- The beliefs and practices mentioned in ch. 4, v. 162 are the same as those in ch. 2, v. 2–5 in somewhat different words. We compare these below:

Ch. 2, v. 2–5	Ch. 4, v. 162
“believe in the Unseen”	“believers in Allah”
“keep up prayer”	“keep up prayer”
“spend out of what We have given them”	“give the due charity (<i>Zakat</i>)”
“believe in what has been revealed to you (O Prophet) and what was revealed before you”	Exactly the same words
“of the Hereafter they are sure”	“believers in ... the Last Day”
“These are on a right course from their Lord and these it is that are successful.”	“these it is to whom We shall give a mighty reward.”

- The ch. 4 passage sheds further light on the meaning of the ch. 2 passage. It makes clear that by belief in “the Unseen” is primarily meant belief in Allah. And by the Hereafter (*akhirah*) is meant the Last Day (*yaum al-akhir*). This second point is important because one Muslim group has argued from the wording of ch. 2:

“who believe in what has been revealed to you (O Prophet) and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are sure”

that “Hereafter” means the revelation to come at some distant future time because it is mentioned after mentioning revelation to the Holy Prophet and revelation before him. But the passage from ch. 4 shows that “the Last Day” is meant.