

(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 *y* is printed in capital, as in: *You*.)

Chapter 2

- 254 O you who believe, spend (on good works) out of what We have given you before the day comes in which there is no bargaining, nor friendship, nor intercession. And the disbelievers — they are the wrongdoers.
- 255 Allah — there is no god but He, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist. Slumber does not overtake Him, nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them. And they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He pleases. His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both does not tire Him. And He is the Most High, the Great.
- 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. 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.

Brief Notes:

V. 255 — This is a very well-known verse which goes under the name of *āyat al-kursī*, or *the verse of knowledge*, because it deals with the all-comprehensive knowledge of Allah.

V. 255 — Islam does not recognize the concept that man stands in need of any mediator to reconcile him with God, as in the sense of the Christian doctrine. The Prophet is the model for his people and in this sense he is called a *shafī'* or *an intercessor*. Those who take him for their model are not all equally gifted, nor have all equal occasion for spiritual progress, though they exert themselves to their utmost. So Divine mercy takes them by the hand and amends are made for their shortcomings through the intercession of the Prophet. It is in this sense that Islam recognizes the doctrine of intercession in the life after death.

V. 256 — To all the allegations that Islam spread by the sword, this verse is a sufficient answer. Being assured of success, Muslims are told that when they hold

power in their hands their guiding principle should be that *there should be no compulsion in the matter of religion*. The claim that this passage was directed only to the early converts and that it was abrogated later on is utterly baseless.