

Sura 9 - Repentance or Immunity

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THE CHAPTER OF REPENTANCE OR IMMUNITY

(IX. Medinah.)

AN immunity from God and His Apostle to those idolaters with whom ye have made a league.

Roam ye at large in the land for four months, but know that ye cannot make God helpless, and that God disgraces the misbelievers. A proclamation from God and His Apostle to the people on the day of the greater pilgrimage, that God is clear of the idolaters as is His Apostle! If then ye repent it is better for you; but if ye turn your backs, then know that ye cannot make God helpless.

Give to those who misbelieve glad tidings of grievous woe!- Except to those of the idolaters with whom ye have made a league, and who then have not failed you at all, and have not back-ed up any one against you. Fulfil for them then your covenant until the time agreed upon with them; verily, God loves those who fear.

But when the sacred months are passed away, kill the idolaters wherever ye may find them; and take them, and besiege them, and lie in wait for them in every place of observation; but if they repent, and are steadfast in prayer, and give alms, then let them go their way; verily, God is forgiving and merciful.

And if any one of the idolaters ask thee for aid, then aid him, in order that he may hear the word of God; then let him reach his place of safety,- that is, because they are a folk who do not know. How can there be for the idolaters a treaty with God and with His Apostle, save those with whom ye have made a league at the Sacred Mosque! Then while they stand by you, stand ye by them; verily, God loves those who fear.

How!- if they prevail against you, they will not observe either ties of blood or ties of clientship; they please you with their mouths, but their hearts refuse; and most of them do work abomination. They barter God's signs for a little price, and they turn folk from His way; verily, they- evil is that which they have done. They will not observe in a believer ties of kindred nor ties of clientship; but they it is are the transgressors. But if they repent and are steadfast in prayer and give alms, then they are your brethren in religion- we detail the signs unto a people that do know.

But if they break faith with you after their treaty, and taunt your religion, then fight the leaders of misbelief; verily, they have no faith, haply they may desist.

Will ye not fight a people who broke their oaths, and intended to expel the Apostle? They began with you at first, are ye afraid of them? God is more deserving that ye should fear Him! If ye be believers, kill them! God will torment them by your hands, and disgrace them, and aid you against them, and heal the breasts of a people who believe; and will remove rage from their hearts; for God turns unto Him whomsoever He pleases, and God is knowing, wise! Did ye reckon that ye would be left, when God knows not as yet those of you who fought strenuously, and who did not take other than God and His Apostle, and

the believers for an intimate friend? for God is well aware of what ye do. It is not for idolaters to repair to the mosques of God, bearing witness against themselves to unbelief; they it is whose works are vain, and in the Fire shall they dwell for aye! He only shall repair to the mosques of God who believes in God and the last day, and is steadfast in prayer, and gives the alms, and fears only God;- it may be that these will be of those who are guided. Have ye made out the giving drink to the pilgrims and the repairing to the Sacred Mosque to be like being one who believes in God and in the last day, and is strenuous in the way of God?- they are not equal in God's sight, and God guides not an unjust people. Those who believe and who have fled and been strenuous in the way of God, with their wealth and with their persons, are highest in rank with God, and these it is who are happy. Their Lord gives them glad tidings of mercy from Himself, and goodwill; and gardens shall they have therein and lasting pleasure, to dwell therein for aye! Verily, God, with Him is mighty here. O ye who believe! take not your fathers and your brothers for patrons if they love misbelief rather than faith; for whosoever amongst you takes them for patrons these are the unjust. Say, 'If your fathers, and your sons, and your brethren, and your wives, and your clansmen, and the wealth which ye have gained, and the merchandise which ye fear may be slack, and the dwellings which ye love are dearer to you than God and His Apostle, and than fighting strenuously in His way,- then wait awhile, until God brings His bidding, for God guides not a people who work abomination!' God has helped you in many a place, and on the day of 'Honein when ye were so pleased with your numbers; but it did not serve you at all, and the road grew too strait for you, where it had been broad; and then ye turned your backs retreating; then God sent down His shechina upon His Apostle and upon the believers; and sent down armies which ye could not see, and punished those who misbelieved; for that is the reward of the misbelievers, then God turns after that to whom He will, for God is forgiving and merciful!

O ye who believe! it is 'Only the idolaters who are unclean; they shall not then approach the Sacred Mosque after this year. But if ye fear want then God will enrich you from His grace if He will; verily, God is knowing, wise! Fight those who believe not in God and in the last day, and who forbid not what God and His Apostle have forbidden, and who do not practice the religion of truth from amongst those to whom the Book has been brought, until they pay the tribute by their hands and be as little ones.

The Jews say Ezra is the son of God; and the Christians say that the Messiah is the son of God; that is what they say with their mouths, imitating the sayings of those who misbelieved before.- God fight them! how they lie!

They take their doctors and their monks for lords rather than God, and the Messiah the son of Mary; but they are bidden to worship but one God, there is no god but He; celebrated be His praise, from what they join with Him!

They desire to put out the light of 'God with their mouths, but God will not have it but that we should perfect His light, averse although the misbelievers be!

He it is who sent His Apostle with guidance and the religion of truth, to make it prevail over every other religion, averse although idolaters may be!

O ye who believe! verily, many of the doctors and the monks devour the wealth of men openly, and turn folk from God's way; but those who store up gold and silver and expend it not in God's way,- give them glad tidings of grievous woe! On the day when it shall be heated in the fire of hell, and their brows shall be branded therewith, and their sides and their backs!- "This is what ye stored up for yourselves, taste then what ye stored up!" Verily, the number of months with God is twelve months in God's Book, on the day when He created the heavens and the earth; of these are four that are sacred; that is the subsisting religion. Then do not wrong yourselves therein, but fight the idolaters one and all, as they fight you one and all, and know that God is with those who fear. Verily, putting off is but an increase in misbelief to lead astray therewith those who misbelieve. They make it lawful one year, but they make it unlawful another year, that they may come to an understanding as to the number which God has made sacred, and make lawful what God has prohibited. Seemly to them are their evil works, but God guides not a misbelieving people.

O ye who believe! what ailed you when ye were told to march forth in God's way, that ye sank down heavily upon the earth? were ye content with the life of this world instead of the next? but the provision of this world's life is but a little to the next. Unless ye march forth He will punish you with grievous woe, and will put in your stead a people other than you! ye cannot hurt Him at all, for God is mighty over all!

Unless ye help him- and God did help him, when those who misbelieved drove him forth the second of two. When they twain were in the cave; when he said to his comrade, 'Grieve not, verily, God is with us;' and God sent down His shechina upon him, and aided him with hosts ye could not see, and made the word of those who misbelieved inferior, and the word of God superior; for God is mighty and wise. March ye then, light and heavy, and fight strenuously with your wealth and persons in God's way; that is better for you if ye did but know! Were there goods nigh at hand, and a moderate journey, they would have followed you; but the distance was too far for them; they will swear by God, 'If we could, we would have gone forth with you.' They destroy themselves, but God knows that they lie! God forgive thee; why didst thou give them leave (to stay) until it was made manifest to thee who spake the truth- until thou mightest know the liars?

Those who believe in God and in the last day will not beg off from fighting strenuously with their wealth and their persons; but God knows those who fear. It is only those who believe not in God and in the last day who beg off from thee, and those whose hearts are in doubt, and in their doubt do hesitate.

Had they wished to go forth, they would have prepared for it a preparation; but God was averse from their starting off, and made them halt, and they were told to sit with those who sit. Had they gone forth with you they would but have made you more trouble, and they would have hurried about amongst you craving a sedition; amongst you are some who would have listened to them; but God knows those who are unjust! They used to crave sedition before and upset thy affairs; until the truth came, and God's bidding was made manifest, averse although they were.

Of them are some who say, 'Permit me, and do not try me!' Have they not fallen

into the trial already, but hell shall encompass the misbelievers.

If good befall thee it seems ill to them; but if a calamity befall thee they say, 'We had taken care for our affair before;' and they turn their backs and they are glad.

Say, 'Nought shall befall us save what God has written down for us; He is our Lord, and upon God believers do rely!' Say, 'Do ye await for us aught but one of the two best things?' we too await for you that God will inflict on you torment from Himself, or by our hands. Wait then; and we with you are waiting too! Say, 'Expend ye in alms, whether ye will or no, it shall not be accepted from you; verily, ye are a people who do work abomination.' But nought hinders their alms-giving from being accepted save that they misbelieve in God and His Apostle, and perform not prayer save lazily, and expend not in alms save reluctantly. Let not their wealth please you nor their children, God only wishes to torment them therewith in the life of this world, and that their souls may pass away while still they misbelieve. They swear by God that, verily, they are of you; but they are not of you, and they are a people who do stand aside in fear. Could they but have found a refuge, or some caves, or a place in which to creep, they would have turned round in haste thereto. Of them are some who defame thee, with respect to alms; though if they are given a part thereof, they are content; and if they are not given a part thereof, then are they in a rage. Would that they were content with what God and His Apostle had brought them, and would say, 'God is enough for us! God will bring us of His grace, and so will His Apostle; verily, unto God is our desire!'

Alms are only for the poor and needy, and those who work for them, and those whose hearts are reconciled, and those in captivity, and those in debt, and those who are on God's path, and for the wayfarer;-an ordinance this from God, for God is knowing, wise. And of them are some who are by the ears with the prophet, and say, 'He is all ear.' Say, 'An ear of good for you!' he believes in God, and believes in those who do believe, and is a mercy unto such of you as believe; but those who are by the ears with the Apostle of God, for them is grievous woe!

They swear by God to please you; but God and His Apostle are more worthy for them to please if they be believers. Do they not know that whoso setteth himself against God and His Apostle, for him is the fire of hell, to dwell therein for aye? and that is mighty shame! The hypocrites are cautious lest there be revealed against them a surah to inform them of what is in their hearts; say, 'Mock ye! verily, God will bring forth that of which ye are so cautious!' But if thou shouldst ask them, they will say, 'We did but discuss and jest;' say, 'Was it at God and His signs, and His Apostle, that ye mocked?' Make no excuse! Ye have misbelieved after your faith; if we forgive one sect of you, we will torment another sect, for that they sinned!

The hypocrites, men and women, some of them follow others, bidding what is wrong and forbidding what is right, and they clench their hands. They forget God and He forgets them! Verily, the hypocrites, they are the doers of abomination!

God has promised unto the hypocrites, men and women, and unto the misbelievers, hell-fire, to dwell therein for aye; it is enough for them! God shall curse

them, and theirs shall be enduring woe. Ye are like those who were before you. They were stronger than you and more abundant in wealth and children; they enjoyed their portion then, and ye enjoy your portion, as they enjoyed their portion before you; and ye discuss as they discussed. Their works are vain in this world and the next, and they it is who lose. Did there not come to them the declaration of those who were before them? of the people of Noah and 'Ad and Thamud, and of the people of Abraham, and the people of Midian? and of the overturned (cities)? Their apostles came to them with manifest signs; for God would not wrong them, but it was themselves they wronged. And the believers, men and women, are some the patrons of others; they bid what is reasonable, and forbid what is wrong, and are steadfast in prayer, and give alms, and obey God and His Apostle. On these will God have mercy; verily, God is mighty, wise! God has promised to believers, men and women, gardens beneath which rivers flow, to dwell therein for aye; and goodly places in the garden of Eden, But good-will from God is the greatest of all! that is the mighty happiness!

O thou prophet! strive strenuously against the misbelievers and the hypocrites, and be stern against them; for their resort is hell, and an ill journey shall it be.

They swear by God they did not speak it, but they did speak the word of misbelief; and they disbelieved after they had embraced Islam, and they designed what they could not attain; and they only disapproved it because God and His Apostle had enriched them of His grace. If they turn again 'tis better for them; but if they turn their backs, God will torment them with mighty woe in this world and in the next, nor shall they have upon the earth a patron or protector. And of them are some who make a treaty with God, that 'If He bring us of His grace, we will give alms and we will surely be among the righteous.' But when He gave them of His grace they were niggardly thereof, and turned their backs and swerved aside. So He caused hypocrisy to pursue them in their hearts unto the day when they shall meet Him,- for that they did fail God in what they promised Him, and for that they were liars!

Do they not know that God knows their secrets and their whisperings, and that God knows the unseen things?

Those who defame such of the believers as willingly give their alms, and such as can find nothing to give but their exertions, and who mock at them,- God will mock at them, and for them is grievous woe! Ask forgiveness for them or ask not forgiveness for them! if they shouldst ask forgiveness for them seventy times, yet would not God forgive them; that is because they disbelieved in God and His Apostle, for God guides not a people who work abomination. Those who were left behind rejoiced in staying behind the Apostle of God, and were averse from fighting strenuously with their wealth and their persons in God's way, and said, 'March not forth in the heat.' Say, 'The fire of hell is hotter still, if ye could but discern!' Let them then laugh little, and let them weep much, as a recompense for that which they have earned!

But if God bring thee back to a sect of them, and they ask thee then for leave to sally forth; say, 'Ye shall by no means ever sally forth with me, nor shall ye ever fight a foe with me! verily, ye were content to sit at home the first time, sit ye then now with those who stay behind.'

Pray not for any one of them who dies, and stand not by his tomb; verily, they disbelieved in God and His Apostle and died workers of abomination!

Let not their wealth and their children please you, God only wishes to torment them therewith in this world, and that their souls may pass away the while they misbelieve.

Whenever a surah is sent down to them, 'Believe ye in God, and fight strenuously together with His Apostle,' those of them who have the means will ask thee for leave to stay at home and say, 'Let us be amongst those who stay behind.' They are content to be with those who are left behind. A stamp is set upon their hearts that they should not discern.

But the Apostle and those who believe with him are strenuous with their wealth and with their persons; these shall have good things, and these it is shall prosper.

God has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, to dwell therein for aye; that is the mighty happiness! There came certain desert Arabs that they might be excused; and those stayed behind who had called God and His Apostle liars. There shall befall those of them who misbelieved, a mighty woe. For the weak, and the sick, and those who cannot find wherewith to expend in alms there is no hindrance, so they be only sincere towards God and His Apostle. There is no way against those who do well; for God is forgiving and merciful. Nor against those to whom, when they came to thee that thou shouldst mount them, thou didst say, 'I cannot find wherewith to mount you,' turned their backs while their eyes poured forth with tears, for grief that they could not find wherewith to expend. Only is there a way against those who ask thee for leave to stay at home while they are rich; content to be with those who are left behind; on whose hearts God has set a stamp, so that they should not know. They make excuses to you when ye return to them: say, 'Make no excuse, we believe you not; God has informed us concerning you. God sees your works and His Apostle too!' Then shall ye be brought back unto Him who knows the unseen and the seen; and He shall inform you of that which ye have done.

They will adjure you by God when ye have come back to them, to turn aside from them; turn ye aside then from them; verily, they are a plague, and their resort is hell! a recompense for that which they have earned!

They will adjure you to be pleased with them; but if ye are pleased with them, God will not be pleased with a people who work abomination.

The Arabs of the desert are keener in misbelief and hypocrisy, and are more likely not to know the bounds which God has sent down to His Apostle; but God is knowing and wise. And of the Arabs of the desert are some who take what they expend to be a forced loan, and they wait a turn of fortune against you; against them shall a turn of evil fortune be; for God both hears and knows.

And of the Arabs of the desert are some who believe in God and the last day, and who take what they expend in alms to be a means of approach to God and to the Apostle's prayers, - is it not a means of approach for them? God will make them enter into His mercy; verily, God is forgiving and merciful.

As for the foremost in the race, the first of those who fled, and the helpers, and those who followed them in their kindness, God is well pleased with them, and they are well pleased with Him; He has prepared for them gardens beneath

which rivers flow, to dwell therein for aye; that is the mighty happiness. And of those who are round about you of the Arabs of the desert, some are hypocrites, and of the people of Medinah, some are stubborn in hypocrisy; thou dost not know them- we know them; we will torment them twice over; then shall they be sent off into mighty woe. And others have confessed their sins,- that they have mixed with a righteous action another evil action;- haply it may be God will turn again to them; verily, God is forgiving and merciful. Take from their wealth alms to cleanse and purify them thereby; and pray for them; verily, thy prayer is a repose for them; for God both hears and knows. Do they not know that God accepts repentance from His servants, and takes alms; and that God is He who is easily turned and merciful. And say, 'Act ye;' and God and His Apostle and the believers shall see your acts, and ye shall be brought back to Him who knows the seen and 'the unseen, and He shall inform you of that which ye have done.

And others are in hopes of God's bidding; whether He will torment them, or whether He turn again towards them; for God is knowing, wise. And there are those who have taken to a mosque for mischief, and for misbelief, and to make a breach amongst the believers, and for an ambush for him who made war against God and His Apostle before; they surely swear, 'We only wished for what was good;' but God bears witness that they are liars.

Never stand up therein!- there is a mosque founded on piety from the first day: it is more right that thou shouldst stand therein;- therein are men who love to be clean; for God doth love the clean. Is he who has laid his foundation upon the fear of God and of His good-will better, or he who has laid his foundation upon a crumbling wall of sand, which crumbles away with him into the fire of hell?- but God guides not a people who do wrong.

The building which they have built will not cease to be a source of doubt in their hearts until their hearts are cut asunder; but God is knowing, wise.

Verily, God hath bought of the believers their persons and their wealth, for the paradise they are to have; they shall fight in the way of God, and they shall slay and be slain: promised in truth, in the law and the gospel and the Koran;- and who is more faithful to His covenant than God?

Be ye glad then in the covenant which ye have made with Him, for that is the mighty happiness! Those who repent, those who worship, those who praise, those who fast, those who bow down, those who adore, those who bid what is right and forbid what is wrong, and those who keep the bounds of God,- glad tidings to those who believe! It is not for the prophet and those who believe to ask forgiveness for the idolaters, even though they be their kindred, after it has been made manifest to them that they are the fellows of hell. Nor was Abraham's asking pardon for his father aught else but through a promise he had promised him; but when it was made manifest to him that he wa's an enemy to God, he cleansed himself of him; verily, Abraham was pitiful and clement.

Nor will God lead astray a people after He has guided them until that is made manifest to them which they have to fear; verily, God all things doth know.

Verily, God's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth! He quickens and He kills! Nor have ye beside God a patron or protector. God has now turned towards the prophet and those who fled with him, and towards the helpers who followed

him in the hour of difficulty, after that the hearts of a part of them had well-nigh gone amiss.

Then He turned unto them; verily, to them He is kind and merciful:- unto the three who were left behind, so that the earth with all its ample space was too strait for them, and their souls were straitened for them, and they thought that there was no refuge for them from God save unto Him.

Then He turned again towards them that they might also turn; verily, God, He is easily turned and merciful!

O ye who believe! fear God and be with those who speak the truth. It was not for the people of Medinah, and those around about them of the Arabs of the desert, to stay behind the Apostle of God and not to prefer their souls to his: that is because neither thirst, nor toil, nor heat, nor hunger befel them on God's way. Nor do they stop to anger the misbelievers, nor do they get any (harm) from the enemy without a good work being written down to them; verily, God wastes not the hire of those who do well.

Nor do they expend in alms a small or great expense, nor do they cross a wady without it being written down to them; that God may reward them with better than that which they have done. The believers should not march forth altogether; and if a troop of every division of them march not forth, it is only that they may study their religion and warn their people when they return to them, that haply they may beware.

O ye who believe! fight those who are near to you of the misbelievers, and let them find in you sternness; and know that God is with those who fear.

And whenever a surah is sent down, there are some of them who say, 'Which of you has this increased in faith?' But as for those who believe, it does increase them in faith, and they shall rejoice: but as for those in whose hearts is sickness, it only adds a plague to their plague, and they die misbelievers.

Do they not see that they are tried in every year once or twice? Yet they do not turn again, nor do they mind!

And whenever a surah is: sent down, some of them look at the others-'Does any one see you?'- Then they turn away! God has turned their hearts, for that they are a people who do not discern. There has come to you an apostle from amongst yourselves; hard for him to bear is it that ye commit iniquity; he is anxious over you after the believers, pitiful, compassionate.

But if they turn their backs, then say, God is enough for me! there is no god but He! upon Him do I rely, for He is Lord of the mighty throne!