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## Surah Al-Baqarah

### Introduction

Al-Baqarah (The Cow) has been named from the story of the Cow occurring in this Surah (verses 67-73) though this is not the only event discussed in this Surah.

This is a Madani Surah. Though the major part of this Surah was revealed during the first two years of the Holy Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) life at Al-Madinah, it follows a Makki Surah Al-Fatihah, which ended with the prayer: "Show us the straight way." It begins with the answer to that prayer, "This is the Book (that)...is guidance..."

There are some Haroof-e-Muqatte'at in Qur'an. Allah (SWT) knows their literal and real meaning better alone. But in many commentaries of the Qur'an, it has been considered an established fact that these words were also the open challenge to the Polytheists, who considered themselves the most eloquent people of the world, they were challenged to create even a single surah of the same rank as were present in the Qur'an.

In this Surah, Allah (SWT) says that this is the Book of Allah (SWT) which has no doubts about it. It is the source of guidance for those who are pious and righteous (muttaqis). The Qur'an is the only Book in this world which starts with the declarative statement that it is free of errors as well as the only Book that can guide us towards Allah (SWT) since guidance is the most precious blessing of Allah (SWT). Worldly things cannot match to it. Since, it is forbearance (Taqwa), an innate feeling of fear of Allah, which will lead to guidance. Therefore, the Qur'an is the source of guidance for the pious (muttaqis).

### The Characteristics of Success

Allah (SWT) has mentioned five characteristics of successful people in the first five verses (ayats) of this Surah. They are discussed here in details.

#### 1. Believe in the Ghaib (Unseen)

The first teaching of this verse (ayat) is the Believe in the unseen (Ghaib). We have to believe in Allah, Angels, the Books, the Messengers, the day of judgement and the divine decree. Allah (SWT) has created everything in a systematic way. Angels perform different duties assigned to them. More than 100,000 prophets had emerged to guide the humanity. There are five divine scriptures mentioned in the Qur'an, but there are even more Holy scribes revealed on different messengers of Allah (SWT) for the guidance of His people. The firm belief in Allah will never let you be disappointed in hard times of life. We can see how the prophets of Allah (SWT) have believed strongly in Allah (SWT) and they have come out of hardships with success due to their strong belief in Allah (SWT). Prophet Ibraheem (AS),

Prophet Ayub (AS), Prophet Yousaf (A.S), and many more. Even the last Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and his companions (R.A) were tested and successfully fulfilled the requirements of a pious Muslim and so, Allah (SWT) never disappointed them. One can see the last words of Hazrat Ali (RA), while He was stabbed in the state of prostration, said: 'By Lord of the Ka'aba (Allah), HazratAli (RA) found the success.' What level of belief would HazratAli (RA) had in Allah (SWT) while the spear is stabbed in from His back and it came out of His chest and He swore on an oath by the Lord of the Ka'aba.

## **2. The Establishment of Salat (Namaz)**

The second important characteristic is Prayer/Salat (Namaz) if a person does good deeds, but ignores his Prayers, all his good deeds will not get the proper weight age. If one deliberately misses a single prayer, he will be considered out of the fold of Islam. Prayer differentiates a Muslim from a non-Muslim. This fact enforces the importance of Salat/Namaz. Prayers to save us from evil wicked deeds. Moreover, people have respect for the person who prays regularly. Prayer is set obligation upon us all.

## **3. The Charity**

The third important aspect is the charity. We must help poor, needy and deserving people financially for the sake of Allah (SWT). Although the charity is not specifically related to money, it may be your time, strengths, abilities, knowledge, energy and everything that you can utilize to benefit the humanity for the sake of Allah (SWT). Every person must figure out about his strengths and to employ them in the path of Allah (SWT). The habit of giving to the people whatever we have for the sake of Allah (SWT) is always an amazing act for us and our success because the act of giving always makes you happier and satisfied instead of taking.

## **4. Believe in Revelation**

The fourth important aspect, we should believe in what have been revealed to the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and before Him (PBUH). In [Surah Nisa 4:113], Allah (SWT) says: We have revealed to you: The Book and the wisdom (Hikmah). So, it's clear that by the Book He means Qur'an and wisdom (Hikmah) lies in Prophet's acts and the Sunnah. We need to believe in what has been revealed by Allah (SWT) to Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). Allah (SWT) revealed the Holy Quran to the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), which is the word of wisdom and a proof of the Divine Message. Quran is safe and secure as it was revealed while the other revealed Books were found altered. Among the books considered to be revealed, the four mentioned by name in the Quran are the Tawrat (Torah) revealed to Prophet Musa (Moses) (AS), the Zabur revealed to Prophet Dawud (David) (AS), the Injil (Gospel) revealed to Prophet IsaJesus (AS), and the Quran revealed to Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). We must follow the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) in every matter. The Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) actions and everything revealed in the Qur'an are worth believing and worth following for us. The first ever verse revealed was 'Iqra' that means Read, which indicates that education is mandatory for every man and woman. Moreover, everyone must have to seek the beneficial knowledge not for the harmful knowledge.

## **5. The Undoubted Faith (Yaqeen)**

The fifth important aspect mentioned in these verses (ayaats) is the undoubted faith. There are three steps of, IIm-UI-yaqeen (Faith gained by knowledge of something), Ain-UI-yaqeen (Faith gained by seeing something) and Haq-UI-yaqeen (Faith gained by experience of something). For example, if someone tells you that there is a fire on the mountain, you may believe in, but by seeing this scene with your eyes will make your belief stronger. If you go to the place of fire and feel the warmth and burning of fire, its flames, the burnt down dust, burnt down trees or place and another loses, it will make your belief stronger to its limit because you have experienced it. Therefore, Allah (SWT) mentioned in Qur'an, people will attain the Haq-UI-yaqeen in the Hereafter. It is also mentioned that the remembrance of the hereafter, changes the human behavior more rapidly than anything else. The belief that we are accountable for our deeds and imagining the sufferings of the fire, helps us to change our hostile behavior. When we will have yaqeen (Faith) in Hereafter, our behavior will change automatically.

It is told that the people who will attain all five characteristics in them, they will be the most guided and the most successful people as mentioned in [Surah Al-Baqarah 2:5]. Allah (SWT) has exalted these people higher in this world and the Hereafter. As Allah (SWT), has mentioned in Surah [Al-Talaq 65:2-3], who has forbearance (Taqwa), Allah (SWT) will remove all his difficulties, Allah (SWT) will provide him sustenance in the world from those sources he would have never imagined of them. Finally, Allah (SWT) will be sufficient for him.

### **Other Perspective Discuss in Surah Al-Baqarah**

- **The Jews**

Polytheists (mushrikeen) at Makkah were ignorant of Islam, but in Madinah Jews were the people who had the revelation by the Prophet Musa (AS). They were initially Muslims, but they not only altered their book and its messages, but also adopted the name of "Jew" instead of Muslim. They were quite aware of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) but denied His (PBUH) very presence and they rather turned to enmity with Him (PBUH). That is the reason of one third of the Surah has addressed the Israelis. This added a critical review of their history, their moral degeneration and their religious perversions.

- **Rules and Regulations**

After the establishment of a Muslim state in Madinah, Quran guided about social, cultural, economic, political and legal problems and their solutions. The half part of this Surah deals with those principles and regulations which are essential for the integration and solidarity of a community and for the solution of community problems. The rules and regulations have been laid down for their organization and social, economic, political and international problems; on the other hand, drinking, gambling, lending money on interest etc., have been prohibited to keep the Muslims safe from bad deeds. Some instructions are given for day-to-day activities.

- **Stories of the Prophets**

The Quran is a book of guidance and invites human to believe in Allah (SWT), Prophet-hood, and Life-after-death. Allah (SWT) invites mankind to accept the Guidance voluntarily and to submit before Allah (SWT). The event of Prophet Adam (AS) shows that the only right thing for them is to accept and follow the Guidance. This event also tells that the Guidance of Islam is the same as was given to Prophet Adam (AS). The events of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and Prophet Musa (AS) also indicate that Allah (SWT) is quite able to resurrect the dead ones and to call them to account for their deeds.

- **Change of Qiblah**

The declaration of the change of “qiblah” from Bait ul Maqdas (Jerusalem) to the Ka`abah (Makkah) is a symbol of the change of leadership from Israel to the Muslim Community. Salat (Prayer), Fast, Zakat, Haj, and Jihad have been made mandatory for the moral training of the Muslim community. The Surah ends with a prayer which is needed by the Muslim Community all the time.