

Fast 15: Islam rejects doctrine of salvation of any group — 1

- Moving further along in chapter 2, in the same discussion that we were looking at earlier, the Quran brings in the following verse:

<p>“Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good, they have their reward with their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.” — ch. 2, v. 62</p>	<p>إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّبِيَّةِينَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾</p>
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This verse occurs in the middle of the history of the Israelites, in which the Quran describes how, again and again, they went against the religion that had been revealed for them. While condemning their wrongs, the Quran puts forward the above principle, which categorises Muslims, Jews and Christians together as regards salvation! (Sabians were followers of a religion in the Middle East which was a mixture of Judaism and Christianity.)

Ch. 5, v. 69 is a very similar verse to this, and that verse too occurs in the middle of a lengthy description of the deviation of the Jews and Christians from the teachings of their prophets.

- The question here arises: If followers of earlier religions can receive salvation and enter heaven or *Jannah* (which is expressed in the words “there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve”), then what was the necessity of Islam coming into the world and why does Islam call upon people to accept it?
- Commentators of the Quran have given two possible answers. One is that this applied to those Jews and Christians who lived prior to the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, who could of course receive salvation without believing in him. Another view, expressed in the English translation of the Quran officially promoted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, is that these two verses have been abrogated and superseded by other verses and no longer apply. This is clearly an unacceptable view. Why should Allah reveal a verse not just once **but twice**, and then cancel its provision? The question of abrogation of this verse is discussed further in our Study 27.
- What this verse means is that in order to reach the state of “having no fear nor grieving”, or salvation, it is necessary to follow certain *principles*. That state cannot be reached by merely calling oneself Muslim, Jew or Christian, by including oneself in any group whose members claim that they receive salvation because of belonging to that group.

- We note in this connection that the Jewish belief was that **only** members of their faith were chosen by God to receive His guidance through His prophets, and that they can obtain salvation by acting rigidly on the law of Moses. The Christian belief was that **only** those who believe that Jesus has died to atone for their sins will obtain salvation. Even a common Muslim belief is that a person who utters the *Kalimah*, to testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger, is safe from the fire of hell, no matter what his deeds. This is a misunderstanding, as we now show below.
- There is a hadith in Bukhari that the Holy Prophet told Muaz ibn Jabal:
 - “There is none who bears witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, truly from his heart, but Allah has made him forbidden to the fire (of hell).” (hadith 128)

But when Muaz asked him if he should pass this news on to other people, as they will be happy to hear this, the Holy Prophet said: “In that case they will depend on this (solely).” The danger in telling this to the people was that they would think they could depend solely on having recited the *Kalima*, and would neglect the doing of good deeds. They would ignore the condition it imposes, that the *Kalima* should be recited “truly from his heart”. That condition means that he is convinced from the bottom of his heart that he must worship nothing but Allah and take Muhammad as the one who has brought to him the message of Allah. Such a person then would never do anything contrary to any teaching of the Quran or the Holy Prophet, and not just recite the *Kalima*. It is related that Muaz did not pass on this saying of the Holy Prophet to anyone else. But when he was close to his death, he narrated this incident because he felt it to be a sin to withhold a saying of the Holy Prophet from people.

- In another incident, the Holy Prophet told Abu Hurairah that if he met anyone who testifies that there is no god but Allah, having certainty in his heart, he should convey to him the good news of paradise. When Umar heard Abu Hurairah telling this to people, he took him back to the Holy Prophet to confirm that he had said this. When the Holy Prophet confirmed that he had said this, Umar said: “Do not do this, for I fear that people will depend on it alone. So let them go on doing good deeds.” The Holy Prophet agreed with Umar (Muslim, book of Faith, ch. 10). Here too, the Holy Prophet had added “having certainty in his heart”. The person should not merely be reciting the *Kalima*, but should be certain of its truth, and therefore acting upon it.
- There are reports in the same place in Muslim where no other condition is mentioned, like sincerity of the heart or having certainty in the heart. It is merely stated: “There is none who bears witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger, but Allah has made him forbidden to the fire (of hell).” But in the light of the Quran and other reports, this cannot be taken *unconditionally*.