

Tafseer Al-Baqarah (2: 284-286)

From the Book, Introduction to the Tafseer of the Quran,
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(Translated)

﴿لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبَدُّوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفَوْهُ يُحَاسِبْكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾ (284) آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ (285) لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إَصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿(286)﴾

“To Allah alone belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Whether you reveal what is in your hearts or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it. He forgives whoever He wills, and punishes whoever He wills. And Allah is Most Capable of everything. (284) The Messenger firmly believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and so do the believers. They all believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, and His messengers. They proclaim, “We make no distinction between any of His messengers.” And they say, “We hear and obey. We seek Your forgiveness, our Lord! And to You alone is the final return.” (285) Allah does not require of any soul more than what it can bear. What it earns of good is for it, and what and what it strove to earn of evil is against it. The believers pray, “Our Lord! Do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake. Our Lord! Do not place a burden on us like the one you placed on those before us. Our Lord! Do not burden us with what we cannot bear. Pardon us, forgive us, and have mercy on us. You are our only Guardian. So grant us victory over the disbelieving people.” [TMQ Surah Al-Baqarah 284-286].

These three verses are the conclusion of Surah Al-Baqarah, and it ends with what it began with; Iman in Allah (swt), His angels, His Books, and His Messengers — what was revealed to you and what was revealed before you.

And just as it began with glad tidings for the believers of success, it likewise ends with what the Companions called “the descent of relief,” when Allah, Glorified be He, pardoned what is within the souls and decreed that accountability would be only for what appears in word or deed. And Allah (swt) is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Allah (swt) said, ﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا﴾ “Allah does not require of any soul more than what it can bear. All good will be for its own benefit, and all evil will be to its own loss.”

Then came the great bounty of Allah (swt) and His vast mercy, for He is Compassionate and Merciful toward the believers. He taught us a supplication that revives the hearts and brings comfort to the souls — a humble plea to the Most Merciful for response and acceptance. Allah (swt) said, ﴿رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إَصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ﴾ “Our Lord! Do not burden us with what we cannot bear. Pardon us, forgive us, and have mercy on us. You are our only Guardian. So grant us victory over the disbelieving people.”

These three verses conclude this magnificent surah by declaring the great bounty of Allah (swt) upon His believing servants. So, glory be to Allah, the Lord of the Mighty Throne!

Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, clarifies in these verses the following:

1. Indeed, Allah (swt) is the Sovereign of the heavens and the earth and all that they contain. He disposes of them as He wills; none can repel His decree. He knows what is open and what is hidden and will hold to account for both. He forgives whom He wills and punishes whom He wills, and Allah (swt) is over all things; He is All-Powerful.

﴿وَإِنْ تُبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبِكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ﴾ Muslim narrated from Ibn Abbas (ra) who said, “When the verse was revealed **“Whether you reveal what is in your hearts or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it,”** ibn Abbas said, “Something of fear entered their hearts from it that had never entered their hearts before. Then the Prophet (saw) said, **«قُولُوا «Say: ‘We hear, we obey, and we submit.’»** Ibn Abbas said, “So Allah (swt) cast Iman into their hearts, and then Allah (swt) revealed, **﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا﴾** **“Allah does not require of any soul more than what it can bear.”**”

In another narration, reported by Muslim from Abu Hurayrah and also by Ahmad from Abu Hurayrah, he said: When it was revealed to the Messenger of Allah (saw), **﴿وَإِنْ تُبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ﴾** **“Whether you reveal what is in your hearts”** that matter became hard upon the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (saw), so they came to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and knelt upon their knees, saying, “O Messenger of Allah (saw), we have been charged with deeds we can bear Salah, Sawm, Jihad, and charity, but now Allah (swt), the Exalted, has revealed to you this verse, and we cannot bear it.” The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, **«أتريدون أن تقولوا كما قال أهل الكتابين من قبلكم ﴿سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا﴾ بل قولوا ﴿سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ﴾** **“Do you wish to say as the People of the Two Scriptures said before you ﴿سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا﴾ “We hear and obey.” Instead, say, ﴿سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ﴾ “We hear and obey. We seek Your forgiveness, our Lord! And to You alone is the final return.”** When the people recited it and their tongues submitted to it, Allah (swt) then revealed thereafter, **﴿أَمَّنَ الرَّسُولُ﴾** **“The Messenger firmly believes.”** When they did so, Allah (swt), the Exalted, abrogated the hukm and revealed, **﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا﴾** **“Allah does not require of any soul more than what it can bear.”** It becomes clear from these two hadiths that the verse, **﴿وَإِنْ تُبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبِكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ﴾** **“Whether you reveal what is in your hearts or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it.”** was abrogated by the verse, **﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا﴾** **“Allah does not require of any soul more than what it can bear”** and that is with regard to accountability for what a person conceals within himself. Allah (swt) said, **﴿أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبِكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ﴾** **“or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it.”**

a. Here, it is not to be said: “How can information (الخير) be abrogated,” since the verse is in the form of information (صيغة الخبر). Allah (swt) said, **﴿وَإِنْ تُبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبِكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ﴾** **“Whether you reveal what is in your hearts or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it.”** That is not to be said, because although it is expressed as information, it carries the meaning of a command to refrain (طلب الترك). That is: do not show anything except what is good, and do not conceal anything except what is good for Allah (swt) holds you accountable both for what you make manifest and for what you hide. Thus, the verse contains a prohibition against harboring evil internally and against displaying it.

Therefore, the Companions (ra) understood from it a Shariah obligation to abstain both from showing evil and from concealing it. It weighed heavily upon them that they would be held accountable for what was within their own souls, because they realized that a person might fear Allah (swt) and remember Paradise, and so refrain from carrying out what he had intended in his heart; it would not then appear through word or deed. However, if he were to be held accountable for what he merely intended without executing it, that would indeed be a heavy burden.

Accordingly, the form of information in the verse which is in the form of a conditional sentence (jumlah shartiyah) carries the meaning of a command to abstain, that is, a prohibition of evil, whether it manifests outwardly through word or deed, or remains concealed within the soul.

And this verse is similar to His saying, **﴿وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفًا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ﴾** **“If there are hundred steadfast among you, they will overcome one thousand of those who disbelieve because they are a people who do not understand.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Anfal: 65]. Here too, it is in the form of information, a conditional statement but it carries the meaning of a command; that is, that one of you must fight ten of the kafireen and not flee before them. Then this verse was abrogated by His saying, Glorified be He, **﴿الآن خَفَّفَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ وَالآن خَفَّفَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ﴾** **“Now Allah has lightened your burden, for**

He knows that there is weakness in you. So if there are a hundred steadfast among you, they will overcome two hundred.” [TMQ Surah Al-Anfal:66] meaning that one should stand firm against two.

b. Likewise, it is not to be said that what a person conceals within himself, if it pertains to belief (Aqeedah), Allah (swt) holds him accountable for it and that this Shariah ruling remains, since abrogation implies the removal of a ruling. Accordingly, there would be no abrogation, but rather a specification by means of the other verse, **﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا﴾** **“Allah does not require of any soul more than what it can bear,”** namely, in matters of Shariah rulings (ahkam shariyyah).

That is not to be said, because the verse, **﴿وَإِنْ تُبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبِكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ﴾** **“Whether you reveal what is in your hearts or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it”** is not about matters of belief (Aqeedah), but rather about legal rulings (ahkam shariyyah), as indicated by the continuation of the verse, **﴿فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ﴾** **“He forgives whoever He wills.”** Now forgiveness is not granted for deviation in matters of belief, for whatever doubt or suspicion enters the heart concerning it is disbelief (kufr); and Allah (swt) does not forgive that partners be associated with Him. Allah (swt) said, **﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ﴾** **“Indeed, Allah does not forgive associating others with Him in worship, but forgives anything else of whoever He wills.”** [TMQ Surah An-Nisa: 48].

Thus, the presence of the possibility of forgiveness for what is made manifest or concealed indicates that the verse is a clear text concerning legal rulings, not matters of Aqeedah.

c. Likewise, there is no need to attempt an interpretation of the verse in order to deny abrogation, such as to say that it concerns the declaration or concealment of testimony, or to attempt an interpretation that it refers to committing an apparent evil deed or committing evil secretly meaning that **﴿وَإِنْ تُبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ﴾** **“Whether you reveal what is in your hearts”** is any giving of testimony, or committing an evil act, whilst **﴿أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ﴾** **“or conceal it”** is any concealing of testimony or committing an evil act secretly. This cannot be said because the matter is related to what is apparent. Allah (swt) said, **﴿تُبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ﴾** **“You reveal what is in your hearts”** and that which does not appear, i.e., remains hidden, does not manifest in word or deed whilst Allah (swt) said, **﴿أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ﴾** **“or conceal it.”** And that is indicated by **﴿مَا فِي﴾** **“what is in your hearts.”** As for when it appears, meaning it is carried out in word or deed, whether openly and visibly or executed in secret, all of that falls under **﴿وَإِنْ تُبْدُوا مَا فِي﴾** **“Whether you reveal what is in your hearts.”** And that is when a person is asked for testimony and he denies it, he conceals part of it, mentions the rest, alters, or changes it; all of that does not fall under, **﴿أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ﴾** **“or conceal it.”** Instead it falls under, **﴿وَإِنْ تُبْدُوا﴾** **“Whether you reveal”** because concealment in the verse refers to what cannot appear in word or deed, with the qareenah (contextualization) of **﴿مَا فِي﴾** **“what is in your hearts.”** So, such an interpretation of what is mentioned in the verse **﴿أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ﴾** **“or conceal it”** is not correct. Thus, the far-fetched interpretation (ta'weel) of the verse's meaning to exclude abrogation is not valid, as long as the meaning of wording is clear without interpretation. That is on the one hand, and on the other hand, authentic narrations, as we mentioned in the reasons for revelation (asbaab un-nuzool), affirm abrogation, and a large number of the Companions (ra) also support the view.

d. Similarly, it is not said, ‘if the intended meaning were **﴿مَا فِي﴾** **“what is in your hearts”** it is what revolves in the soul, for in that case Allah (swt) would have obligated us with what is unbearable, because the impulses of the soul cannot be controlled; meaning that the verse, before abrogation, would constitute a Shariah obligation that is beyond one's capacity in this sense.

That is not said because concealment in the verse is not related to the impulses of the soul. Instead, it is what one harbors of evil without acting upon it; for example, if a person harbors in his heart that he will steal, commit adultery, insult someone, or harm someone, this is concealment as it remains confined in the soul and does not manifest in word or deed. All of this is within a person's capacity, so it is not a Shariah obligation beyond one's ability.

Muhammad (saw) by making his message the final law, abrogating previous rulings, as indicated in the Noble Verse ﴿تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ﴾ **“We have chosen some of those messengers above others”** [TMQ Surah Al-Baqarah 253]. Its lack of contradiction with ﴿لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ﴾ **“We make no distinction between any of His messengers”** is because this refers to the absence of differentiation in Prophethood: all the Messengers are equal in terms of Prophethood, with no distinction among them.

Thus, Allah (swt) clarified in His Book and His Messenger (saw) explained in his Sunnah, and the believers followed this, saying: ‘We hear and obey. Forgive us, our Lord, and to You is the final return,’ after they had been as Allah (swt), Glorified be He, described, ﴿كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ﴾ **“They all believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, and His messengers. They proclaim, “We make no distinction between any of His messengers.”** They are true believers who listen and obey with acceptance and compliance, unlike the disbelievers among the People of the Book in their saying, ﴿سَمِعْنَا﴾ **“We hear and disobey.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Baqarah: 93]. And they likewise seek Allah’s forgiveness at all times, and in the Hereafter they believe that they will inevitably return to the Lord of the heavens and the earth.

As for ﴿آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ﴾ **“The Messenger firmly believes,”** it is truthful with certainty and conviction. Abu Awana narrated in his Musnad from Ibn Abbas (ra) who said: When it was revealed, ﴿آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ﴾ **“The Messenger firmly believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord”** The Messenger of Allah (saw) recited it, and when he said, ‘Forgive us, our Lord,’ Allah said, ‘I have forgiven you.’

As for ﴿بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ﴾ **“in what has been revealed to him from his Lord”** that is, the Noble Qur’an.

As for ﴿وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ **“and the believers”** it is conjoined with the Messenger (saw).

As for ﴿كُلٌّ آمَنَ﴾ **“They all believe in Allah”** that is, each one of them individually, to indicate that Iman is not a collective matter but pertains to each person separately. Therefore, the Noble Verse does not use the plural form (آمَنُوا) “they believe” even though it refers to them; rather, Allah (swt), Glorified be He, says, ﴿آمَنَ﴾ **“believes”** with the pronoun in the singular because Iman pertains to each individual among them.

Regarding the conjunction (atf) of ﴿وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ **“and the believers”** upon ﴿الرَّسُولُ﴾ **“The Messenger”** is the more correct view, and it is stronger than the opinion that ﴿الْمُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ **“The believers”** is the muftada’ (subject) for continuation (istinaaf), because by conjunction it signifies that the Iman of the Messenger of Allah (saw) in what was revealed, the Qur’an is the basis, and the believers follow him. They have believed in the Noble Qur’an upon the Dawah of the Messenger of Allah (saw). Thus, the revelation of the Qur’an to the Messenger (saw) precedes the believers’ Iman in it.

However, if the “and” (al-waw و) were for continuation, that is, ﴿آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ﴾ **“the Messenger believed”** and then ﴿وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ﴾ **“the believers. They all believe”** it would then express the belief of the Messenger of Allah (saw) with a verbal sentence (jumla fa’liyah), and the belief of the believers with a nominal sentence (jumla ismiyyah), whilst the nominal sentence is stronger in expression. This is not consistent with the sequence of the Noble Quran being revealed first to the Messenger (saw), and then the believers having belief in it afterward.

Therefore, pausing (waqoof) after ﴿وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ **“the believers”** is more correct than pausing after ﴿رَبِّهِ﴾ **“his Lord”**.

As for ﴿كُلٌّ آمَنَ﴾ **“they all believe,”** it’s a continued sentence (jumla musta’nafah) consisting of a subject (muftada) and predicate (khabr), and it is not ﴿كُلٌّ﴾ **“all”** as emphasis (ta’keed) on ﴿الْمُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ **“the believers”** because ﴿كُلٌّ﴾ **“all”** does not serve as emphasis except when attached to a pronoun (dameer) for emphasis, which it is not here. Thus, as we said, it is a continued sentence with a subject (muftada) and predicate (khabar).

As for ﴿سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا﴾ “we hear and we obey” i.e., hearing with acceptance and compliance, and the mention of hearing before obedience is because obligation is conveyed through hearing, and obedience follows it.

As for ﴿غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا﴾ “Your forgiveness, our Lord,” i.e., ‘seek forgive by Your forgiveness’; the word ghufran (forgiveness) is a verbal noun (masdar) in the place of the absolute accusative (mafool mutlaq), in deputing substitution for its verb (fi’l).

As for ﴿وَالْيَاكُوفِ الْمَصِيرُ﴾ “to you is the final return” that is, the return through death and resurrection.

3. And in the concluding verse of Surah Al-Baqarah lies what the believers called a relief, for Allah (swt) made accountability and punishment based on what appears through the limbs in actions and words, not on what remains hidden within the hearts, and does not manifest in word or deed.

Then came what Allah (swt) caused to flow upon the tongues of the Messenger (saw) and the believers that Allah (swt), not hold them accountable for forgetfulness or error, not place upon them burdensome covenants, not charge them with what they cannot bear, and that He encompass them with His pardon and forgiveness and grants them victory over the disbelieving people. Then came the glad tidings of Allah’s response to His Messenger (saw) and the believers indeed, He, Glorified be He, is the Most Kind, the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

As for ﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا﴾ “Allah does not require of any soul more than what it can bear,” i.e., Allah (swt) does not burden anyone except with what is within their capacity. Capacity refers to what a person’s ability can encompass without reaching the limit of utmost endurance. Allah (swt), has obligated us with Salah (Shariah prayer) and Sawm (Shariah fasting), yet these are less than the full extent of our endurance, for we are capable of praying and fasting more than what we have been commanded with. However, Allah (swt) has only obligated us according to our capacity, not to the utmost limit of our strength.

As for ﴿لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ﴾ “What it earns of good is for it, and what it earned of evil is against it,” i.e., He holds it accountable for what appears through the limbs in deed or word, rewarding it for good and punishing it for evil.

Ibn Jarir narrated from Ibn Abbas (ra) about ﴿لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ﴾ “What it earns of good is for it, and and what it strove to earn of evil is against it,” who said, عمل اليد والرجل واللسان “the actions of hand, foot, and tongue.”

This verse was a relief for the Muslims, for through it Allah (swt), pardoned what may arise in their hearts of evil, as long as they do not manifest it in word or deed. Indeed, He has only obligated them according to their capacity, and holds them accountable only for what they outwardly express in word or action, not for what remains hidden in their hearts, so long as it pertains to the Shariah legal rulings (ahkam shariyyah). As for belief (aqeedah), it is firm belief whose place is the heart. Thus, accountability and punishment apply to doubt and hesitant wavering in it, as we explained earlier. However, in matters of Shariah rulings apart from aqeedah, Allah (swt) has pardoned what occurs within the soul, as long as it does not manifest outwardly in word or deed.

As for ﴿لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ﴾ “What it earns of good is for it, and what it earned of evil is against it,” and its combination ﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ﴾ “Allah does not require of any soul more than what it can bear. What it earns of good is for it, and what it strove to earn of evil is against it” it abrogates the saying of Allah (swt), وَإِنْ تُبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبْكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ﴿ “Whether you reveal what is in your hearts or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it,” as we explained earlier.

As for ﴿لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ﴾ “What it earns of good is for it” that is, for it is rewarded for the good it has done.

As for ﴿وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ﴾ “and what it strove to earn of evil is against it,” i.e., for it is held accountable for the evil it has done. In the verse, earning (kasab) is specified with good and

striving to earn (iktasaba) with evil, and this carries a meaning. The extended verb forms of iftiala and iftaala indicate a more severe demand than the simple fa'la, as if it relates evil to desires, which the souls are drawn to. Hence, the souls strive more in earning evil than in earning good, as the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, «خَفَّتِ الْجَنَّةُ بِالْمَكَارِهِ، وَخَفَّتِ النَّارُ بِالشَّهَوَاتِ» **“Paradise is surrounded by hardships, and Hellfire is surrounded by desires.”** [Muslim: 5049; At-Tirmidhi: 2482; Ahmad: 7216, 8587, 12101, 13177, 13519; Ad-Darimi: 2720; and the narration in Al-Bukhari: ‘Hellfire is surrounded by desires and Paradise is surrounded by hardships,’ 6006.]

As for ﴿رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا كَمَالٍ عَلَيْهِ﴾ **“Our Lord! Do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake. Our Lord! Do not place a burden on us like the one you placed on those before us. Our Lord! Do not burden us with what we cannot bear. Pardon us, forgive us, and have mercy on us. You are our only Guardian. So grant us victory over the disbelieving people,”** this is an honor for the Messenger of Allah (saw) and the believers, for He taught us a supplication in which we beseech Allah (swt), Glorified be He, for forgiveness, mercy, and victory. He is the Most Majestic and Honorable, All-Hearing, Responsive, Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Imam Ahmad narrated, on the authority of Abu Huraira, ﴿لَمَّا نَزَلَ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ (لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبَدُّوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفَوْهُ يُحَاسِبِكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ فَيَعْفُورُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ) فَاشْتَدَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى صَحَابَةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ ... إِلَى أَنْ يَقُولَ: فَلَمَّا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ نَسَخَهَا اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى بِقَوْلِهِ: ﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا قُدْرَتَهَا﴾ **“When the verse was revealed to the Messenger of Allah (saw), “To Allah alone belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Whether you reveal what is in your hearts or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it. He forgives whoever He wills, and punishes whoever He wills. And Allah is Most Capable of everything,”** this greatly distressed the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (saw)... until he says: So when they did that, Allah, Blessed and Exalted is He, abrogated it with His saying, **“Allah does not require of any soul more than what it can bear. What it earns of good is for it, and what strives to earn of evil is against it,”** the ayah.”

And it was narrated by Muslim, and his wording continues, ﴿لَمَّا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ نَسَخَهَا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى فَانزَلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا﴾ قَالَ، نَعَمْ ﴿رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا﴾ قَالَ، نَعَمْ ﴿رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ﴾ قَالَ، نَعَمْ ﴿وَاعْفُ عَنَّا﴾ **“And when they did that, Allah (swt) abrogated it and revealed, “Allah does not require of any soul more than what it can bear. What it earns of good is for it, and what strives to earn of evil is against it. The believers pray, “Our Lord! Do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake.”” The Prophet (saw) said, “Yes, ““Our Lord, and do not place upon us a burden like that which You placed upon those before us.”” He (saw) then said, “Yes, “Our Lord! Do not place a burden on us like the one you placed on those before us.”” He (saw) then said, “Yes, “Pardon us, forgive us, and have mercy on us. You are our only Guardian. So grant us victory over the disbelieving people.”” Then Allah (swt) said, “Yes.” And in another narration, Allah (swt) said, “I have done so.”**

This is a great favor from Allah (swt), for He taught us what to supplicate with and gives us the glad tidings of acceptance, ﴿قَدْ فَعَلْتَ﴾ **“He said: Yes’ or ‘He said: I have done it,”** meaning He answered.

As for ﴿رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا﴾ **“Our Lord! Do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake,”** it is a humble plea to Allah (swt), that He not hold us accountable for forgetfulness or error.

And this means that forgetfulness and error, as mentioned in the verse, would entail sin, as indicated by the supplication to Allah (swt).

As for ﴿رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا﴾ **“Our Lord! Do not punish us,”** accountability refers to punishment. That is, the forgetfulness and mistaken error mentioned in this verse is not the same as the

forgetfulness and error in the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (saw), «إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَضَعَ عَنْ أُمَّتِي الْخَطَأَ، وَابْتِغَاءَ الْحَرَامِ، وَالنِّسْيَانَ، وَمَا اسْتَكْرَهُوا عَلَيْهِ» **Indeed, Allah (swt) has lifted from my Ummah the blame for error, forgetfulness, and what they are compelled to do,**” narrated by Ibn Majah. The hadith means that there is no punishment for these matters, so how is that reconciled?

The origin of forgetfulness is derived from unintentional omission; it means abandoning a matter of Allah (swt) without deliberate intent. This can be understood in two ways:

Firstly: It occurs without any relation to the servant’s voluntary action, such as someone who eats or drinks in Ramadan forgetfully, or is afflicted by illness causing weak memory and forgets some of what they have memorized of the Qur’an, or some of their obligations. This kind of forgetfulness and similar cases incur no accountability and fall under the meaning of the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (saw), «إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَضَعَ عَنْ أُمَّتِي الْخَطَأَ، وَابْتِغَاءَ الْحَرَامِ، وَالنِّسْيَانَ، وَمَا اسْتَكْرَهُوا عَلَيْهِ» **“He has lifted from my Ummah the blame,”** meaning He removed accountability; thus, Allah (swt), does not hold them accountable for this forgetfulness.

Secondly: It is what has a connection to the servant’s voluntary action, such as someone who is preoccupied with other matters and misses a Shariah prayer until its time passes, or someone who neglects the Qur’an and forgets what they have memorized without illness or weak memory, or someone who is distracted from their obligations by personal interests and forgets appointments or fails to preserve them, and similar cases. These are sins resulting from forgetfulness, and they fall under the supplication mentioned in the verse, ﴿رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا﴾ **“Our Lord! Do not punish us if we forget.”**

Likewise, error is of two types:

The first type: error that is opposite to deliberate intent, meaning it occurs without any connection to the servant’s voluntary action in intending the error. Examples include, someone who tries to determine sunset and breaks the fast, but the sun has not yet set due to clouds obscuring it, or lack of a timekeeping device; someone who gets lost in the desert on a cloudy night and tries to determine the Qiblah and prays Salah of Fajr, only to find in the morning that they faced the wrong direction; someone unable to correctly recite Al-Fatihah in prayer due to mental weakness, or difficulty in pronunciation, mispronouncing its letters; or someone unfamiliar with a matter performs it incorrectly, such as a person from the desert praying with the Messenger of Allah (saw), and expelling during prayer without knowing it invalidates the Salah, due to lack of knowledge from living far from Madinah and absence of someone to instruct him. Such actions fall under the meaning of the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (saw), «إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَضَعَ عَنْ أُمَّتِي الْخَطَأَ، وَابْتِغَاءَ الْحَرَامِ، وَالنِّسْيَانَ، وَمَا اسْتَكْرَهُوا عَلَيْهِ» **“He has lifted from my Ummah the blame”**

The second type: it is when someone deliberately commits an error against what is correct, meaning they act contrary to the Shariah knowingly. This refers to voluntary actions committed with intent to err, such as breaking the fast in Ramadan before sunset while knowing it, or failing to learn the required rulings of Shariah despite being able to, and then knowingly committing what Allah (swt) has prohibited.

Such actions and similar ones, involving the commission of what Allah (swt) has prohibited, constitute the errors for which the servant asks his Lord not to hold him accountable, and they fall within the scope of this Noble Verse, ﴿وَاعْفُ عَنَّا﴾ **“Our Lord! Do not punish us,”** that is, that He pardon this error, as is clarified in the continuation of the verse, ﴿رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا﴾ **“Pardon us.”**

Accountability refers to punishment, and means the doing of the punishment that is from Allah (swt) upon the servant. The term aakadha (أَخَذَ) here does not imply participation. Allah (swt) is the Only One Who holds the servant accountable that is, punishes him.

In the Noble Verse, we humbly ask Him not to punish us for this forgetfulness, meaning neglecting to fulfill Allah’s commands without deliberate intent, but due to distraction or procrastination in performance, causing us to miss them. Nor do we ask for punishment for errors we commit knowingly in acts contrary to what is correct, thus falling into what Allah (swt) has prohibited.

This is the forgetfulness and error mentioned in the Noble Verse for which accountability applies. As for the other types of error and forgetfulness we have explained, accountability for them has been lifted from us by the mercy of Allah (swt), as stated in the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (saw), «إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَضَعَ عَنْ أُمَّتِي الْخَطَأَ وَالنَّسْيَانَ وَمَا اسْتَكْرَهُوا عَلَيْهِ» **“Indeed, Allah (swt) has lifted from my Ummah the blame for error, forgetfulness, and what they are compelled to do.”**

And here, a question may arise: if the error and forgetfulness mentioned in the verse, for which we ask Allah (swt), not to hold us accountable, are considered sins, how do we understand Allah’s response mentioned in the hadith of Muslim that we cited? How do we comprehend this response after all the Dua supplications? Does it mean that we are never held accountable for these sins at all?

Allah’s response, means as explained by the Messenger of Allah (saw) that Allah fulfills for us what we make Dua for, erases the sin from us and forgives it, averts a similar evil from us, or stores reward for us on the Judgement Day for our supplication.

At-Tirmidhi narrated, on the authority of Abu Huraira, that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, «مَا مِنْ رَجُلٍ يَدْعُو اللَّهَ بِدُعَاءٍ إِلَّا اسْتَجِيبَ لَهُ فِيمَا أَنْ يَعْجَلَ لَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِمَّا أَنْ يُدَخَّرَ لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَإِمَّا أَنْ يُكَفَّرَ عَنْهُ مِنْ ذُنُوبِهِ بِقَدْرِ مَا دَعَا مَا لَمْ يَدْعُ بِإِثْمٍ أَوْ قَطِيعَةٍ رَحِمَ أَوْ يَسْتَعْجَلُ، قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَكَيْفَ يَسْتَعْجَلُ؟ قَالَ، يَقُولُ دَعَوْتُ رَبِّي فَمَا اسْتَجَابَ لِي». وفي رواية أخرى له من طريق جَابِرٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ، «مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَدْعُو بِدُعَاءٍ إِلَّا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ مَا سَأَلَ» **“No man prays to Allah (swt) with a Dua except that it is answered for him; either it is hastened for him in this world, or it is stored for him in the Hereafter, or a sin of his is forgiven according to the measure of his Dua supplication, provided he does not ask with sin or severing of kinship.”** They said, **“O Messenger of Allah (saw), how does one hasten it?”** He said: **“He says, ‘I have supplicated my Lord, but He did not respond to me immediately.’”** In another narration on the authority of Jabir, he said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, **“No one makes a Dua except that Allah (swt) grants him what he asked for, or averts from him a similar evil, provided he does not ask with sin or severing of kinship.”**

And this is like His statement, Glorified be He, ﴿وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ﴾ **“Your Lord has proclaimed, “Call upon Me, I will respond to you.”** [TMQ Surah Ghafir: 60] and ﴿وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ﴾ **“When My servants ask you O Prophet about Me: I am truly near. I respond to one’s Dua when they call upon Me.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Baqarah:186].

It connects the response to the Dua supplication of the believers, all in the sense of the response mentioned by the Messenger of Allah (saw). Therefore, the acceptance is by the grace of Allah (swt), as explained. We make Dua to Allah (swt) for pardon, forgiveness, victory over the disbelievers, that He (swt) not punish us for our sins due to forgetfulness and error, and that He not place upon us burdensome covenants. In all of this, we are certain of the response, as Allah (swt) gave us glad tidings in the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (saw), ‘He (swt) said: Yes.’ This response may be through Allah (swt) fulfilling the Dua, erasing the sin and forgiving it, granting victory over the disbelievers; or by averting from us the evil we prayed against; or by storing it for us on the Judgement Day. He is the Most Kind, Most Forgiving, Most Merciful. Thus, the response does not necessarily occur in this world, but as we have explained.

As for ﴿رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا﴾ **“Our Lord! Do not place a burden on us like the one you placed on those before us,”** the word ﴿إِصْرًا﴾ **“burden”** is severe matter and a heavy burden that restrains its bearer, as if it weighs him down. Every covenant involving a heavy matter (إِصْر). And Allah (swt) said, ﴿وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ﴾ **“and relieves them from their burden and the shackles that bound them.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Araf: 157].

And it is a Dua to Allah (swt) , that He not hold us to a covenant requiring the fulfillment of matters whose burden is heavy, and difficult for us to perform, as He held previous nations accountable, such as the Children of Israeel, with the command to kill themselves, as a

means to attain repentance. Allah (swt) responded by making repentance accessible to those for whom He facilitated it for. It consists of sincerity to Allah (swt) by abandoning the sin, refraining from returning to it, and rectifying its consequences, not by taking one's own life as was commanded of the Children of Israeel.

As for ﴿رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ﴾ **“Our Lord! Do not burden us with what we cannot bear,”** that is, O Lord, do not punish us with punishments we cannot bear, as happened to previous nations such as sinking into the earth, transformation, destruction, and thunderbolts.

After Allah (swt), taught us to supplicate that He not make our obligations too difficult or burdensome, He also taught us to ask that He not punish us with what we have no strength to endure. Indeed, He is the Most Kind, the Most Merciful.

As for ﴿وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَارْحَمْنَا﴾ **“Pardon us, forgive us, and have mercy on us.”** Hedid not begin it with ‘Our Lord’ as in the previous Dua because these three are in contrast to the earlier supplications; they are conjoined to them and represent their outcomes. Forgiveness corresponds to not being held accountable for sins due to forgetfulness and error; pardon corresponds to our inability to properly perform burdensome matters, if covenants were imposed upon us; and mercy corresponds to our being spared punishment beyond our capacity.

As for ﴿أَنْتَ مُوَلَانَا﴾ **“You are our only Guardian,”** i.e., our Owner, Master, and Guardian over our affairs. Its origin is a verbal noun intended to indicate the doer (faa'il), and it carries the meaning of saying, ‘You are our Master.’

As for ﴿فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ﴾ **“So grant us victory over the disbelieving people,”** the letter fa “so” indicates causality, because the reason for supplicating for Allah’s help is that He, Glorified be He, is the Master, Owner, and Planner of affairs like saying, ‘You are the generous, so grant me,’ or ‘You are the hero, so protect the neighbor.’

Imam Ahmad narrated from Abu Dharr that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, «أُعْطِيَتْ» **“I was given the conclusions of Surah Al-Baqarah from a treasure beneath the Throne, and no Prophet (as) before me was given them.”**

In another hadith, also narrated by Imam Ahmad through Hudhayfah, he (saw) said, «وَأُعْطِيَتْ هَذِهِ الْآيَاتِ مِنْ آخِرِ الْبَقَرَةِ مِنْ كَنْزٍ تَحْتَ الْعَرْشِ لَمْ يُعْطَهَا نَبِيٌّ قَبْلِي» **“And I was given these verses from the end of Al-Baqarah from a treasure beneath the Throne; no prophet before me was given them.”**