

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

*With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful,
the Very-Merciful.*

SURAT¹ AL-BAQARAH (THE COW)

THEY ASK THEE CONCERNING THE NEW MOONS. SAY: THEY ARE BUT SIGNS TO MARK FIXED PERIODS OF TIME IN (THE AFFAIRS OF) MEN, AND FOR PILGRIMAGE. IT IS NO VIRTUE IF YE ENTER YOUR HOUSES FROM THE BACK: IT IS VIRTUE IF YE FEAR ALLAH. ENTER HOUSES THROUGH THE PROPER DOORS: AND FEAR ALLAH: THAT YE MAY PROSPER.
[2:189]

In the Holy Qur'an there are thirteen places where Allah (SWT) has referred to the questions asked to the Prophet Muhammad (S) by the people who were embracing Islam.

[2:215]

They ask you as to what they should spend.

[2:217]

They ask you about the Sacred Month,

[2:219]

They ask you about wine and gambling.

¹ Surat: Chapter from the Holy Qur'an.

[2:220]

They ask you about the orphans.

[2:222]

They ask you about menstruation.

Surat Al-Mā'idah (The Table Spread)

[5:4]

They ask you as to what has been made lawful for them.

Surat Al-'A`rāf (The Heights)

[7:187]

They ask you about the Hour (i.e. the Doomsday), When is it due to happen?

Surat Al-'Anfāl (The Spoils of War)

[8:1]

They ask you about the spoils.

Surat Al-'Isrā' (The Night Journey)

[17:85]

And they ask you about the soul.

Surat Al-Kahf (The Cave)

[18:83]

They ask you about Dhul-Qarnain.

Surat Tāhā (Ta-Ha)

[20:105]

They ask you about the mountains.

These questions are just examples to understand the concern of companion's willingness to follow Allah's will. They were asking to Prophet Muhammad (S) because they wanted to understand the boundaries to live as per commands of Allah in their all aspects of life. They knew that he is the Prophet and he can tell the will of Allah. This is the religious conciseness and it is the basis of faith.

Surat al-Baqarah is the second *Surat* of the *Holy Qur'an*. In the first half of the *Surat* mostly the address is to the general people who had not yet embraced Islam. In this part of the *Surat* mainly righteousness of *Holy Qur'an* and the groups of people who have accepted Islam and those who did not accept are mentioned. In this part *Tawheed*² (Monotheism) and *Risalat*³ (Message) are also explained.

*Al- Ibrahim*⁴ (A.S.) is reminded about the blessing they were showered by

² Tawheed: Monotheism.

³ Risalat: Message, (Rasool: Messenger)

⁴ Al-Ibrahim: Children of Ibrahim. (Ibrahim known as Abraham in the Old Testament, is recognized in Islam as a prophet of Allah)

Allah (S). In this section basic and general rules in reference to *shir'k*⁵ are addressed to non-believers and believers are warned too.

In the second half of the *Surat* mainly Muslims are addressed and righteousness is defined so that faith, actions and *Akhlaq*⁶ can be built accordingly.

Referring to the tradition it seems in the above *ayat*⁷ [2:189], question to *Rasool Allah*⁸ (S) was about the new moon. They asked about the gradual appearance and the purpose of it. Reply from the *Rasool Allah* (S) is not an explanation of lunar system instead he redirected to the practical aspect of life which is the theme of the Holy Qur'an so

⁵Shir'k: Associating partners.

⁶Akhlaq: An Arabic term referring to the practice of virtue, morality and manners in Islamic theology and *falsafah* (philosophy). It is most commonly translated in English dictionaries as; disposition, nature, temper, ethics, morals or manners (of a person)

⁷ Ayat: Verses.

⁸Allah: The proper name applied to the Being who exist necessarily by Himself. This word has neither feminine nor plural. This word is only applied to the Unimaginable Supreme Being.

that man can understand the purpose of creation that is *ibadaht*⁹.

In the days of ignorance (*jahiliah*) it was prohibited to enter into house from the front door in *Ihram*¹⁰. They used back door or even used to make hole in the back wall if they needed to go into the house. It was considered righteous to do so. In above *ayat* after mentioning “*They are but signs to mark fixed periods of time in (the affairs of) men, and for Pilgrimage*” next *ayat* comment on entering in house from the back door in *Ihram* which was not righteous act as righteousness lies in abstaining from what has been made unlawful by *Allah*. As entering into house from the front door in *Ihram* is not forbidden, it is not needed to enter from back door. The main principal is to do as *Allah* likes, right or wrong is commanded by Him. What He has ordered to do and what is forbidden is to be followed.

⁹ Ibadah: obedience with submission.

¹⁰ Ihram: A sacred state which a Muslim must enter in order to perform the major pilgrimage (Hajj) or the minor pilgrimage (Umrah). A pilgrim must enter into this state before crossing the pilgrimage boundary, known as Miqat, by performing the cleansing rituals and wearing the prescribed attire.

These *Ayat* also teaches that counting of months and days are based on lunar system, so all the worship based on months and specific dates of the month like *Hajj*¹¹ on ninth day of the month of *zul-Hajj* and fasting in month of Ramadan are performed.

There are 345 days in one lunar year that is little less than days in one solar year. A common purely lunar calendar is the Islamic calendar or Hijri Qamari calendar. In the Islamic calendar a year is always 12 months, so the months are not linked with the seasons and drift in each solar year is by 11 to 12 days. This drift makes all the worship based on months appear in different seasons at same geographical area. It comes back to the position it had in relation to the solar year approximately every 33 Islamic years.

¹¹ Hajj: It is an annual Islamic pilgrimage to Makkah, and a mandatory religious duty for Muslims that must be carried out at least once in their lifetime by all adult Muslims who are physically and financially capable of undertaking the journey, and can support their family during their absence. It is one of the five pillars of Islam.

As The *Holy Qur'an* teaches about the lunar calendar. Muslims are supposed to follow it at least for personal use.

All Islamic teaching are for the better life in this world and in world hereinafter, the basic teaching is "be mindful of Allah, so that you may prosper".