

Surah 2. Al-Baqara

Asad: And [remember the time] when We vouchsafed unto Moses the divine writ - and [thus] a standard by which to discern the true from the false³⁸ - so that you might be guided aright;

Malik: We gave Musa (Moses) the Holy Book (Torah) and the criterion of right and wrong so that you might be rightly guided.

Pickthall: And when We gave unto Moses the Scripture and the Criterion (of right and wrong), that ye might be led aright.

Yusuf Ali: And remember We gave Moses the Scripture and the criterion (between right and wrong) there was a chance for you to be guided aright. ⁶⁸

Transliteration: Waith atayna moosa alkitaba waalfurqana laAAallakum tahtadoona

Khatab:

And ?remember? when We gave Moses the Scripture—the standard ?to distinguish between right and wrong? that perhaps you would be ?rightly? guided.

Author Comments

38 - Muhammad 'Abduh amplifies the above interpretation of al-furqan (adopted by Tabari, Zamakhshari and other great commentators) by maintaining that it applies also to "human reason, which enables us to distinguish the true from the false" (Manar III, 160), apparently basing this wider interpretation on 8:41, where the battle of Badr is described as yawm al-furqan ("the day on which the true was distinguished from the false"). While the term furqan is often used in the Qur'an to describe one or another of the revealed scriptures, and particularly the Qur'an itself, it has undoubtedly also the connotation pointed out by 'Abduh: for instance, in 8:29, where it clearly refers to the faculty of moral valuation which distinguishes every human being who is truly conscious of God.

68 - God's revelation, the expression of God's Will, is the true standard of right and wrong. It may be in a Book or in God's dealings in history. All these may be called His Signs or Miracles. In this passage some commentators take the Scripture and the Criterion (Furqan) to be identical. Others take them to be two distinct things: Scripture being the written Book and the Criterion being other Signs. I agree with the latter view. The word Furqan also occurs in xxi. 48 in connection with Moses and Aaron and in the first verse of Sura xxv, as well as in its title, in connection with Muhammad. As Aaron received no Book, Furqan must mean the other Signs. Mustafa had both the Book and the other Signs: perhaps here too we take the other Signs as supplementing the Book. Cf. Wordsworth's "Arbiter undisturbed of right and wrong." (Prelude, Book 4)

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