

## Surah 2. Al-Baqara

Asad: And yet, it is you who slay one another and drive some of your own people from their homelands, aiding one another against them in sin and hatred; but if they come to you as captives, you ransom them - although the very [act of] driving them away has been made unlawful to you!<sup>69</sup> Do you, then, believe in some parts of the divine writ and deny the truth of other parts? What, then, could be the reward of those among you who do such things but ignominy in the life of this world and, on the Day of Resurrection, commitment to most grievous suffering? For God is not unmindful of what you do.

Malik: Yet there you are, killing your own people, expelling a group amongst you from their homes, backing each other with sin and aggression; and if they come to you as captives, you trade them for ransoms whereas their expulsion was unlawful for you to begin with. Do you believe in a part of your Holy Book and reject the rest? So what other punishment do such people among you, who behave like this, deserve, than disgrace in this world and to be driven to grievous punishment on the Day of Judgment? Allah is not unaware of what you do.

Pickthall: Yet ye it is who slay each other and drive out a party of your people from their homes, supporting one another against them by sin and transgression, and if they came to you as captives ye would ransom them, whereas their expulsion was itself unlawful for you. Believe ye in part of the Scripture and disbelieve ye in part thereof? And what is the reward of those who do so save ignominy in the life of the world, and on the Day of Resurrection they will be consigned to the most grievous doom. For Allah is not unaware of what ye do.

Yusuf Ali: After this it is ye the same people who slay among yourselves and banish a party of you from their homes; assist (their enemies) against them in guilt and rancor; and if they come to you as captives ye ransom them though it was not lawful for you to banish them. Then is it only a part of the Book that ye believe in and do ye reject the rest? But what is the reward for those among you who behave like this but disgrace in this life? and on the Day of Judgment they shall be consigned to the most grievous penalty. For Allah is not unmindful of what ye do.<sup>89</sup>

Transliteration: Thumma antum haolai taqtuloona anfusakum watukhrijoona fareeqan minkum min diyarihim tathaharoonaa AAalayhim bialithmi waalAAudwani wain yatookum osara tufadoohum wahuwa muharramun AAalaykum ikhrajuhum afatuminoona bibaAAadi alkitabi watakfuroona bibaAAadin fama jazao man yafAAalu thalika minkum illa khizyun fee alhayati alddunya wayawma alqiyamati yuraddoona ila ashaddi alAAathabi wama Allahu bighafilin AAamma taAAamaloona

Khatab:

But here you are, killing each other and expelling some of your people from their homes, aiding one another in sin and aggression; and when those ?expelled? come to you as captives, you still ransom them—though expelling them was unlawful for you.<sup>1</sup>

Do you believe in some of the Scripture and reject the rest? Is there any reward for those who do so among you other than disgrace in this worldly life and being subjected to the harshest punishment on the Day of Judgment? For Allah is never unaware of what you do.

## Author Comments

69 - This is a reference to the conditions prevailing at Medina at the time of the Prophet's hijrah. The two Arab tribes of Medina - Al-Aws and Khazraj - were in pre-Islamic times permanently at war with one another; and out of the three Jewish tribes living there - the Banu Qaynuqa', Banu 'n-Nadir and Banu Qurayzah - the first-named two were allied with Khazraj, while the third was allied with Al-Aws. Thus, in the course of their warfare, Jew would kill Jew in alliance with pagans ("aiding one another in sin and hatred"): a twofold crime from the viewpoint of Mosaic Law. Nevertheless, they would subsequently ransom their mutual captives in obedience to that very same Law - and it is this glaring inconsistency to which the Qur'an alludes in the next sentence.

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The indigenous people of Medina were divided into two warring groups: Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj. Some Jewish tribes were allied with the former and others with the latter, which meant that in times of war each of these Jewish tribes had to fight along with their allies against their enemies, including other Jews. When the Prophet (?) migrated to Medina, he brought about a lasting peace in the city.

89 - I understand "ransom them" here to mean "take ransom for them" though most of the Commentators take it to mean "give ransom for them". Mustafa had made a Pact which, if it had been faithfully observed by all parties, would have brought a reign of law and order for Medina. But some of the treacherous Jews never intended to observe its terms. They fought and slew each other and not only banished those who were obnoxious to them but intrigued with their enemies. If by chance they came back into their hands as captives, they demanded ransom for them to return to their homes although they had no right to banish them at all. If we understand by "ransom them" pay "ransom for them to release them from the hands of their enemies," it would mean that they did this pious act for show, although they were themselves the authors of their unlawful banishment. I think the former makes better sense.

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