

Surah 3. Al-i'Imran

Asad: Say: "O followers of earlier revelation! Come unto that tenet which we and you hold in common:⁴⁹ that we shall worship none but God, and that we shall not ascribe divinity to aught beside Him, and that we shall not take human beings for our lords beside God."⁵⁰ And if they turn away, then say: "Bear witness that it is we who have surrendered ourselves unto Him.

Malik: Say: "O people of the Book! Let us get together on what is common between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah; that we shall not associate any partners with Him; that we shall not take from among ourselves any lords beside Allah." If they reject your invitation then tell them: "Bear witness that we are Muslims (who have surrendered to Allah)."

Pickthall: Say: O People of the Scripture. Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partners unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside Allah. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him).

Yusuf Ali: Say: "O people of the Book! come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not from among ourselves Lords and patrons other than Allah." If then they turn back say: "Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah's will)."⁴⁰²

Transliteration: Qul ya ahlal kitabi taAAalaw ila kalimatina sawain baynana wabaynakum alla naAAabuda illa Allaha wala nushrika bihi shayan wala yattakhitha baAAaduna baAAadan arbaban min dooni Allahi fain tawallaw faqooloo ishadoo bianna muslimoona
Khattab:

Say, O Prophet, "O People of the Book! Let us come to common terms: that we will worship none but Allah, associate none with Him, nor take one another as lords instead of Allah." But if they turn away, then say, "Bear witness that we have submitted to Allah alone?"

Author Comments

49 - Lit., "a word [that is] equitable between you and us". The term kalimah, primarily meaning "word" or "utterance", is often used in the philosophical sense of "proposition" or "tenet".

50 - Lit., "that we shall not take one another for lords beside God". Since the personal pronoun "we" obviously applies to human beings, the expression "one another" necessarily bears the same connotation. In its wider implication, the above call is addressed not merely to the Christians, who attribute divinity to Jesus and certain aspects of divinity to their saints, but also to the Jews, who assign a quasi-divine authority to Ezra and even to some of their great Talmudic scholars (cf. {9:30-31}).

402 - In the abstract the People of the Book would agree to all three propositions. In practice they fail. Apart from doctrinal lapses from the unity of the One True God, there is the question of a consecrated Priesthood (among the Jews it was hereditary also), as if a mere human being-Cohen, or Pope, or Priest, or Brahman, could claim superiority apart from his learning and the purity of his life, or could stand between man and Allah in some special sense. The same remarks apply to the worship of saints. They may be pure and sincere, but no one can protect us or claim Lordship over us except Allah. For Rabb, see i. 2. n. Abraham was a true Prophet of Allah, but he could not be called a Jew or a Christian as he lived long before the Law of Moses or the Gospel of Jesus was revealed.

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