

Tafseer Al-Baqarah (2: 189)

by the Ameer of Hizb ut Tahrir, the eminent jurist and statesman, Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah:

﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهْلِ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ النَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ اتَّقَى
وَأَتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾

“They ask you, [O Muhammad], about the Crescent Moons. Say, “They are measurements of time for the people and for Hajj.” And it is not righteousness to enter houses from the rear, but righteousness is [in] one who fears Allah. And enter houses from their front doors. And fear Allah that you may succeed.” [Surah al-Baqarah 2:189]

1. Allah (swt) has clarified regarding Fasting and its rulings, and in the subsequent verses, He (swt) clarified regarding jihad, noble month, Hajj and well-known months. And amongst the verses of Fasting, the noble month of Ramadhan and Hajj, He (swt) mentioned here the wisdom behind the creation of moon and its phases which appear as crescent and then as full moon which then wane, as they wax before. Then Allah (swt) mentioned its wisdom, as time measurements for people, such as the days of Ramadan, as RasulAllah (saw) said, «صوموا لرؤيته وأفطروا لرؤيته» **“Fast on seeing it (the new moon) and break fast on seeing it”** [Bukhari 1776, Muslim 1809]. It also includes days of Hajj, as Allah (swt) said, «الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَاتٌ» **“Hajj is of well-known months.”** [Surah al-Baqarah 2:197]. It is also a measurement for the months of year, as RasulAllah (saw) said, «السنة اثنا عشر شهرا» **“The year is of twelve months since Allah (swt) created heavens and earth, four of which are sacred, and out of these (four) three are in succession, i.e. Dhul-Qa'da, Dhul-Hijja and Al-Muharram, and the (remaining) one is single: Rajab.”** [Bukhari:2958, Muslim:3179, Abu Dawood: 1663].

«جعل الله الأهلّة مواقيت للناس فصوموا لرؤيته وأفطروا لرؤيته فإن غم عليكم فعدوا ثلاثين يوماً» RasulAllah (saw) said, **“Allah made the Crescent Moons (الأهلّة) as time measurements for people, so fast on seeing it and break fast on seeing it. If the sky is overcast over you, then count as thirty days”** [Ahmed 4/23].

So Allah (swt) answered the questions about the Crescent Moon by stating that it is for measurements of time for people, i.e. details about the days of Ahkam Shariyah (أحكام شرعية) Legal Rulings related to it. The word Ahilla (Crescent Moons أَهْلَةٌ) is the plural of the word Hilal (Crescent Moon هلال) and it comes from the word Ihlal (الإهلال) Cheer) which means the raising of the voice. So, when they saw the Crescent Moon, they used to raise their voices with takbeer or something else to welcome the month, particularly during the days of worshiping, such as Fasting or Hajj. It is said: أَهْلًا (أهلٌ بالقوم) “People welcome the month of Hajj” when they raise the voice of Thalbiya (تلبية Response of Labaik). It is also said (استهَلَّ الصبي) “istahalla as-sabiyyu” “the child shouted,” when the child cries and shouts. Hence Ihlal is raising the voice when the Crescent Moon is seen. It is said أَهْلُ الْهَلَالِ وَاسْتَهَلَّ “Ahallal Hilalu Was thahalla” which means “Hilal (Crescent Moon) made (someone) raise their voice and he shouted” and it cannot be said that أَهْلُ الْهَلَالِ “Hallal Hilaalu” which means “the Crescent Moon raised its voice.” This is because the voice is raised only when the Crescent Moon is sighted and the voice is not raised by the Crescent Moon itself.

2) When Allah (swt) mentioned the crescent as time measurements for legislation in general and Hajj in particular, ﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهِلَّةِ ۚ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ﴾ **“They ask you, [O Muhammad], about the Crescent Moons. Say, “They are measurements of time for the people and for Hajj,”** He (swt) mentioned one of the matters (customs) of Hajj that was widespread in the Days of Ignorance and they thought that it was one of the signs of righteousness. That matter was when they were in a state of Ihram for Hajj, they did not enter into the house of Madar wa Wabar (مدر ووبر the resident and the nomads) or the garden or the like of it through the front door. Instead they used to climb in from the rear of the house. They thought that it was righteousness. Allah (swt) informed them that it is not righteousness, as they claimed, to change the permission of Allah (swt) of entering houses from their front doors, into entering houses from the rear, without any evidence or proof.

Instead righteousness is in the Taqwa (تقوى Piety) in Allah (swt), fear of Allah (swt) and adherence to His (swt) Shariah. So leave your customs of entering houses from the rear and enter them from the front doors and perform what Allah (swt) orders you and guard against what Allah (swt) has forbidden to you, so that you will be successful.

The subject of the verse is what we have mentioned before is as reported from Bukhari from Al-Barra (ra) who said, **“In the Pre-Islamic Period when the people assumed Ihram, they would enter their houses from the rear. So Allah revealed, “And it is not righteousness that you enter houses from the rear.” [Surah al-Baqarah 2:189]. [Bukhari 4512].** In origin a word is used with its Sareeh (صريح Explicit) meaning, appropriate to its subject, and so it is front doors of the homes and their rear, Haqeeqatan (حقيقة Literally).

However, the notion of Kinayah (كناية Metaphor) by meaning is not excluded here. Hence the connotation of the noble verse does not give the meaning of entering houses from their front doors and not from their rear alone. It also gives the meaning of undertaking actions according to the perspectives, by which the actions must be undertaken, and they must not be done on the contrary, such that their actions are detracted from their perspectives, from Bab Al-Laf Wal- Dawraan (باب اللف والدوران Chapter of Detours and Evasions).

The Arabs permitted the usage of the Sareeh (صريح Explicit) meaning and the Kinayah (كناية Metaphor) meaning for an indicated word. They used to say Nu'oom Ad-Dhuha (نؤوم الضحى), “one who sleeps during forenoon,” to denote the Explicit meaning which is that of a spoiled person, who sleeps into the forenoon, is engaged so he cannot be asked to do work. Similarly, they used this word to denote the Metaphor which means laziness and lack of impetus in performing actions. Therefore this is understood from the verse, **“And it is not righteousness to enter houses from the rear, but righteousness is [in] the one who fears Allah. And enter houses from their front doors.”**

Its Explicit meaning is the entering of houses from their doors and not from the rear, since it was the subject about which the verse was revealed. However, adding the Metaphor, with the above meaning, is not excluded i.e. the undertaking of actions according to the perspectives, by which the actions must be undertaken, and they must not be done on the contrary, such that their actions are detracted from their perspectives, from Bab Al-Laf Wal- Dawraan (باب اللف والدوران Chapter of Detours and Evasions).

Allah (swt) said, **“And it is not righteousness to enter houses from the rear.”** Here Righteousness is read as Al-Birru (البرّ) with the Raf'a (رفع Nominative Case) since it is the Ism (اسم Subject Noun) for the verb Laysa (ليس. Not to Be). All Mutawatir (متواتر Successively Confirmed) recitations are read as above. Here the Masdar Muawwal (مصدر مؤول Verbal Noun/Gerund) of أتوا “entering” is the Khabar (خبر Predicate) of Laysa (ليس. Not to Be) and the Harf al-Jari Az-Zaaid (حرف الجر الزائد Extra Genitive Preposition) of Bey (ب “B”) does not fall under the Ism (اسم Subject Noun) of Laysa. Instead it falls under the Khabar (خبر Predicate) of Laysa.

And in the previous verse, **“Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west”** [Surah al-Baqarah 2:177] Here, Righteousness is pronounced both as Al-Birru (البرّ) with the Nasab (نصب Accusative Case) ending and as Al-Birru (البرّ) with the Raf'a (رفع Nominative Case) according to all Mutawatir (متواتر Successively Confirmed) recitations from RasulAllah (saw). In the recitation of Al-Birru with the Raf'a ending (رفع Nominative Case), it is the Ism (اسم Subject Noun) of Laysa, whilst the Masdar Muawwal (مصدر مؤول Verbal Noun/Gerund) of Tawleeyah (تولية Turning) from تولوا “turning” is Khabar (خبر Predicate) in the place of Nasab (نصب Accusative Case). Whereas in the recitation of Al-Birru (البرّ) with the Nasb ending, it is Khabar (خبر Predicate) of Laysa found in the preceding Nasab (نصب Accusative Case) form, whilst the Masdar Muawwal (مصدر مؤول Verbal Noun/Gerund) أن تولوا “turning” is the Ism (اسم Subject Noun) of Laysa in the place of Raf'a (رفع Nominative Case).