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|     |  |     |
|-----|--|-----|
| 1.  | Allah's Ultimate Power ( <i>Soorat al Baqarah</i> 2: 258)                | 01  |
| 2.  | The Story of a Man ( <i>Soorat al Baqarah</i> 2: 259)                    | 05  |
| 3.  | Knowledge Deepens Faith ( <i>Soorat-al-Baqarah</i> 2: 260)               | 10  |
| 4.  | The Miraculous Story of Man's Creation                                   | 14  |
| 5.  | Materialistic Ideologies   | 19  |
| 6.  | Sickness: Its Kinds and Cures  | 26  |
| 7.  | The Virtue of Patience and Prayer ( <i>Soorat al-Baqarah</i> 2: 153-157) | 34  |
| 8.  | Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (1)   | 42  |
| 9.  | Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (4)   | 47  |
| 10. | Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (3)   | 53  |
| 11. | Sending <i>Salaat</i> upon the Prophet ( <i>Soorat al-Ahzaab</i> 33: 56) | 61  |
| 12. | Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (4)   | 67  |
| 13. | Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (5)   | 78  |
| 14. | Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (6)   | 87  |
| 15. | Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (7)   | 92  |
| 16. | Prophet Aadam عليه السلام  | 97  |
| 17. | Prophet 'Easaa عليه السلام   | 106 |
| 18. | Etiquette of Sleeping and Waking up                                      | 114 |
| 19. | Islam and Personal Hygiene   | 120 |
| 20. | Purification is One Half of Faith  | 128 |
| 21. | Matters of Dress and Adornment ( <i>Zeenah</i> )                         | 135 |
| 22. | Earning a Livelihood by Lawful Means ( <i>al-Kasb min al-Halaal</i> )    | 140 |
| 23. | 'Uthmaan ibn 'Affaan رضي الله عنه  | 146 |
| 24. | Ali ibn Abee Taalib رضي الله عنه   | 154 |
| 25. | The Four Imaams  | 161 |



|     |  |     |
|-----|--|-----|
| 26. | The Evil of Usury ( <i>ar-Ribaa</i> ) ( <i>Soorat al Baqarah</i> , 2: 275-281) | 175 |
| 27. | The Authority and Importance of the <i>Sunnah</i>                              | 182 |
| 28. | Marriage in Islam  | 187 |
| 29. | The Rights and Duties of Husbands and Wives                                    | 195 |
| 30. | Marital Discord and Divorce  | 202 |
| 31. | Parenting in Islam   | 209 |
| 32. | The Funeral Prayer ( <i>Janaazah</i> )   | 215 |
| 33. | The Night of Power ( <i>al-Qadr</i> ) ( <i>Soorat-al-Qadr</i> : 1-5)           | 223 |
| 34. | <i>Taraaweeh</i> and <i>I'tikaaf</i>   | 229 |
| 35. | The Two D's: Drinks and Drugs  | 233 |
| 36. | Islam and the World of Sciences  | 239 |

# Allah's Ultimate Power

## Soorat al Baqarah, 2: 258

1

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

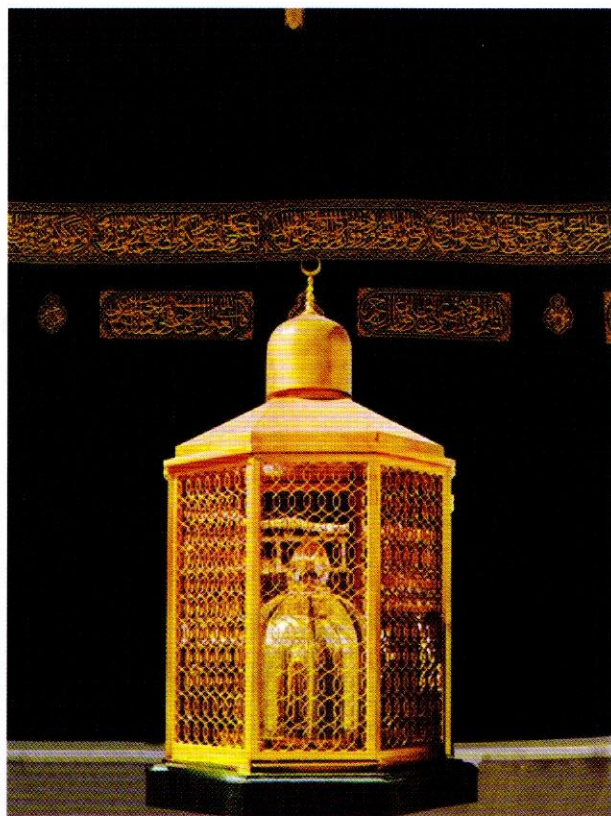
### Translation of the Meaning of this Verse

Are you not aware of the man who argued with Ibraaheem about his Lord, because Allah had given him kingdom? When Ibraaheem said, 'My Lord is He Who grants life and death.' He said, 'I give life and death.' Said Ibraaheem, 'Well, then, Allah causes the sun to rise in the east, so cause it to rise in the west!' Thus was he who disbelieved confounded. And Allah does not guide the unjust people. (2: 258)

### The Debate between Prophet Ibraaheem عليه السلام and King Nimrod

The king referred to in this verse was Nimrod (Namrood), king of Ur, the land of Ibraaheem's birth, Iraq. It is said that Ibraaheem's father was a favoured officer in the kingdom of Nimrod. He had denounced his own son to the king for preaching the Oneness of Allah. Nimrod was a disbeliever. He denied the existence of Allah. He arrogantly and defiantly claimed that he was the creator and pretended that he could give life and cause death. Later on, Pharaoh (Fir'awn) imitated him and declared, 'I do not know that you have a god other than me.' (28: 38)

It was Nimrod who had built a huge fire in which Ibraaheem عليه السلام was flung. The king was later killed by a gnat which entered his brain and ate it. The dearest



of people to him after that was the one who would hit his head with a hammer! He suffered for forty days. (Tafseer al-Qurtubee)



One day the people went out to a festival. All the people rejoiced and set out for the celebration, which they used to observe regularly. Prophet Ibraaheem عليه السلام did not join the festival. When he found himself alone at home, he went forth to the huge building where the idols were kept. He hit the idols with an axe and smashed all of them except for the largest idol which he left unharmed and then hung the axe round its neck.

The people returned from the festival and went into the building where the idols were kept. They were especially keen to bow down before the idols because it was the day of their festival. They were amazed and dumbfounded at what they saw.

‘Who has done this to our gods?’ they cried. They asked Ibraaheem عليه السلام, ‘Are you the one who did this to our gods?’

Ibraaheem عليه السلام pointed out to the large idol and said, ‘But this, their chief has done it. Ask them if they are able to speak.’

## Before the King

When Nimrod heard that Ibraaheem عليه السلام prostrated himself only before Allah and would not prostrate himself before anyone else, he became angry and set out for him. Ibraaheem عليه السلام came straightaway. He did not fear anyone except Allah.

The king asked, ‘Who is your Lord Ibraaheem?’ Ibraaheem عليه السلام replied, ‘My Lord is Allah.’ The king asked, ‘And who is Allah, Ibraaheem?’ Ibraaheem answered, ‘The One Who gives life and causes death.’ The king said, ‘I give life and cause death.’

The king then had a man brought before him and had him killed. Then he had another man brought before him and spared his life. Then he proudly said to Ibraaheem عليه السلام, ‘Did you see? I give life and cause death. I put one man to death and let the other man live.’

The king was very silly.  
idol-worshippers behave foolishly  
such matters.

Allah had given Nimrod power. But power in the hands of those who do not believe or appreciate Allah's grace and favour can corrupt and lead to tyranny. Ibraaheem wanted to make the king understand. He wanted to make all people understand that there is no god but Allah.

He said to the king, ‘Well, then, All causes the sun to rise from the east, cause it to rise from the west!’

# The Story of a Man

## (Soorat al Baqarah 2: 259)

2

أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّى يُحْيِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا  
فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ. قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ. قَالَ بَلْ  
لَبِثْتُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ فَانْظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ وَانْظُرْ إِلَى حِمَارِكَ  
وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَانْظُرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنْشِزُهَا ثُمَّ  
نَكْسُوهُمَا لَحْمًا فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٥٩﴾

### Translation of the Meaning of this Verse

Or like him who passed by a town whose roofs had caved in. He said, 'Oh! How can Allah ever bring it to life, after its destruction?' So Allah caused him to die for a hundred years, then raised him up again. He said, 'How long have you remained in this state?' He said, 'I have remained in this state for a day or a part of a day.' He said, 'No, you have remained in this state for a hundred years. Now, look at your food and your drink – it is untouched by the passage of time; and look at your donkey [how We restore it to life that you might gain surety of belief concerning resurrection]. And [We did all this] so that We might make you a sign for people. And look at the bones – how We put them together and clothe them with flesh.' When this became clear to him, he exclaimed, 'I know that Allah has power over all things.' (2: 259)

**Who was the man who passed by the town? which town was it?**

This verse has aroused a great deal of interest among Qur'an commentators, or the *tafseer* scholars.

Who was the man who passed by the ruined town? Which town was it? What did the man have for food and drink? When did this incident take place?

Allah, Most High, caused him to die for a hundred years. He then brought him back to life. While he was dead, the man obviously lost all sense of time and could not tell how long he had been in that state. This is easy to understand. Human beings often misjudge things even when they are in full control of their senses. Scholars have pointed out that since the man was made to die in the early part of the day and Allah resurrected him in the latter part of some other day, when he saw that the sun was still apparent, he thought that it was the sun of that very day. 'How long have you remained in this state?' The man replied, 'A day or a part of a day.' But the man was informed, 'No, you have remained in this state for a hundred years!'



- ✍ Why do you think Allah has mentioned the incident and not the details of the man or the town?
- ✍ The man's exclaiming 'How can Allah ever bring it to life...' was not due to a deficient faith. Explain.
- ✍ How does Allah deal with the sincere seekers of truth?
- ✍ What was Allah's wisdom behind making the man undergo the wonderful experience of creation?

## The Day of Resurrection

The question and answer sequence is meant to demonstrate that on being restored to life on the Day of Resurrection, a person will have no idea how long he had spent in *barzakh* – the interim period intervening between one's death and the Day of Judgement. On being raised, he will feel as if he had just woken up after a short nap. A person will feel that his life on earth was not something in his distant past. It would rather appear to be just something that happened only yesterday, in the morning or evening.



## The Man's Donkey

None of the man's food and drink went bad. It remained in good condition. But the man's donkey was not around. The donkey was made to die along with him. Its bones lay scattered here and there. Now Allah said, 'And look at your donkey. How We bring it back while you are watching.'

Ibn Katheer reported that As-Suddee, one of the early Qur'an