

replied, 'We will worship your God, the God of your forefathers Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac, the One God. To Him we submit ourselves.' (133) That community has passed away. Theirs is what they had earned and yours is what you have earned. You shall not be questioned about what they did. (134) They say, 'Follow the Jewish faith — or, follow the Christian faith — and you shall be rightly guided.' Say, 'No. We follow the faith of Abraham, who was truly devoted to God, and was not of those who associated partners with God.' (135) Say [all of you], 'We believe in God and in what has been revealed to us, and in what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants, and in what was given to Moses and Jesus, and in what all prophets have been given by their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to God we have surrendered ourselves.' (136) If they come to believe in the way you believe, they will be rightly guided; but if they turn away, they will be in schism, but God will protect you from them; He hears all and knows all. (137) [This message takes its] hue from God; who can give a better hue than God? Him alone do we worship. (138) Say, 'Would you dispute with us about God? He is our Lord and your Lord. To us our deeds shall be credited and to you, your deeds. To Him alone we are devoted.' (139) Do you claim that Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes were Jews or Christians? Say, 'Do you know better than God? Who is more wicked than one who suppresses a testimony he has received from God? God is not unmindful of what you do. (140) That community has passed away. Theirs is what they earned and yours is what you have earned. You shall not be questioned about what they did. (141)

#### Overview

So far in the surah, the debate with the people of earlier revelations, i.e. the Jews and the Christians, has mainly focused on the historical record of the Israelites and their response to the Prophets who came to lead them, the teachings that these Prophets preached, and the covenants and pledges to which the Israelites committed themselves. This covered a historical span from the era of Moses to the time of Muhammad (peace be upon them both). The argument so far was in the most part with the Jews, shorter ones with the Christians, with a few references to the idolaters, particularly when they shared certain features with the other two groups.

In this section we are taken farther back in history, to the era of Abraham. The events and amount of detail presented here fall neatly into context with the subject matter of the surah as a whole. They are also immediately relevant to the long and hard debate that was taking place between the Muslims and the Jews in Madinah when these verses were revealed.

The people of earlier revelations trace their origins back to Abraham by way of his son Isaac (peace be upon them). Understandably, they have always been proud of this relationship, just as they have cherished the promises God made to Abraham to bless him and his seed, and the covenant God made with them. This has led them to make exclusive claims to righteousness and custodianship of God's message to

oneness, renege on their commitments to God and, as such, cannot be the heirs to the divine faith.

The Qur'an further establishes that Islam, in the sense of submission to God alone, was the first and the last divine message to mankind. It was the religion of Abraham and of Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the Hebrew tribes who came after him, and was handed down to Moses and Jesus until it was eventually inherited by the Muslims. All true and faithful followers of those and other prophets and messengers belong to the same nation and share in all the merits and rewards of following the religion of Islam in its wider, universal version. All those who reject the religion of Abraham or renege on any of their covenants with God forfeit their claim to those privileges and rewards.

Thus we can see how Jewish and Christian claims to an exclusive possession of God's true religion, by virtue of lineage to Abraham, are totally groundless. They lost that right the moment they deviated from the true faith based on total submission to God alone. For the same reason, the idolater Arabs of the Quraysh forfeited their claim to the exclusive custodianship of the Ka'bah. Likewise, the Jewish argument for opposing the designation of the Ka'bah as the qiblah for the Muslims falls apart, because the Ka'bah was the original qiblah of their forefather Abraham, and therefore it was theirs also.

Following this brief introduction, let us now take a closer look at the account of Abraham, his covenant with God, and its significance in the history of the religion of Islam.

#### Abraham's Covenant

*When his Lord tested Abraham with certain commandments and he fulfilled them, He said, 'I have appointed you a leader of mankind.'* Abraham asked, 'And what of my descendants?' God said, 'My covenant does not apply to the wrongdoers.' (124)

The Prophet is here reminded of how God had imparted certain commandments and obligations to Abraham in order to test his faith, loyalty and resolve. Elsewhere in the Qur'an, he is described as "Abraham, who was faithful to his trust." (53: 37) This is a recognition by God of Abraham's faithful and complete fulfilment of those obligations, according him a very high rank in God's estimation. Hence, God's promise: "I have appointed you a leader of mankind" Thus, Abraham becomes the leader to be followed, the one who shows people the way to all goodness.

Being human, Abraham is immediately prompted to wish for that blessing and privilege to be extended to his offspring. What Abraham expressed was a natural instinctive human reaction, because man is always eager to multiply and perpetuate his achievements and attainments. By the passing of knowledge and experience from

#### القرآن في رمضان 1446 هـ / 2025 م Quran in Ramadan 1446H / 2025G 1446 هـ

Selected verses from each of the thirty parts of the Holy Qur'an are presented every night of Ramadan this year to our beloved ones who pray in Tarawih prayers over a period of thirty days, coexisting under its shadows, arranged in a few pages accompanied by a modest interpretation in Arabic and English. When gathered, it will become a complete book for reference.

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Calgary, Canada

1446 H 2025 G

### Part 1 Surah 2 Al-Baqarah Verses 124-141

#### Universal Faith

*When his Lord tested Abraham with certain commandments and he fulfilled them, He said, 'I have appointed you a leader of mankind.'* Abraham asked, 'And what of my descendants?' God said, 'My covenant does not apply to the wrongdoers.' (124) *We made the House [i.e. the Ka'bah] a resort for mankind and a sanctuary: "Make the place where Abraham stood as a place of prayer." We assigned to Abraham and Ishmael the task of purifying My House for those who walk around it, those who sojourn there for meditation and those who bow down and prostrate themselves in prayer.* (125) *Abraham said, 'Lord, make this a land of security and make provisions of fruits for those of its people who believe in God and the Last Day.'* God said, 'And as for he who disbelieves, I shall let him enjoy life for a while and then I shall drive him to suffering through the fire; and what a terrible end!' (126) *As Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House, [they prayed]: "Our Lord, accept this from us; You are the One that hears all and knows all.* (127) *Our Lord, make us surrender ourselves to You, and make out of our offspring a community that will surrender itself to You. Show us our ways of worship and accept our repentance; You are the One who accepts repentance, the Merciful.* (128) *Our Lord, send them a Messenger from among themselves who shall declare to them Your revelations, and instruct them in the Book and in wisdom, and purify them. You are Mighty and Wise.'* (129) *Who but a foolish person would turn away from the faith of Abraham? We raised him high in this life, and in the life to come he shall be among the righteous.* (130) *When his Lord said to him, 'Submit yourself', he said, 'I have submitted myself to the Lord of all the worlds.'* (131) *Abraham enjoined the same on his children, and so did Jacob, saying, 'My children, God has given you the purest faith. Do not let death overtake you before you have submitted yourselves to God.'* (132) *Were you present when death approached Jacob? He asked his children, 'Whom will you worship when I am gone?' They*

mankind. It has also misled them into believing that heaven is exclusively theirs, whatever they do.

The Quraysh Arab tribe living in Makkah were also Abraham's descendants through his other son, Ishmael. They were also just as proud of their ancestry as the Jews were of theirs. It gave them the privilege of being the custodians of the sacred shrine of the Ka'bah in Makkah, which had, in turn, given them the religious authority, honour, power and position they enjoyed over the rest of the Arabs.

Towards the end of the last passage, we saw how the Qur'an refuted Jewish and Christian claims to exclusive righteousness and salvation: "They declare: 'None shall enter Paradise unless he is a Jew or a Christian.'" (111) *Hard did they try to convert Muslims to Judaism or Christianity: "They say: 'Follow the Jewish faith' — or, 'Follow the Christian faith' — and you shall be rightly guided."* (135) It also condemned those who prevent people from worshipping in God's places of worship — which, as we said, was probably linked to the issue of changing the direction Muslims face in prayer from Jerusalem to the Ka'bah in Makkah — and efforts to exploit that issue to create division and confusion within Muslim ranks.

In this section, and still within the same context of Jewish, Christian and pagan claims, the surah recounts parts of the history of Abraham and his sons Ishmael and Isaac, and gives a final ruling on the qiblah issue. The occasion is also used to establish the truth regarding the religion of Abraham, which was based purely on the belief in God's absolute oneness. Thus, it remains at complete variance with the distorted beliefs adopted by those three groups, while its affinity to the message of the Prophet Muhammad was total. It denounces the monopoly of religious righteousness by any nation or racial group, stressing that religion resides in the believer's heart; it is not inherited through blood or ancestral lineage. Religion belongs to God Almighty, who is not related through blood or ancestry to any human individual or group. Those who believe in His religion and practise it properly shall be its rightful custodians and trustees, at all times, regardless of their race or ethnic origin.

The Qur'an presents these facts, which form some of the most basic tenets of Islamic belief, in a fine, clear and elegant style. It takes the reader step by step through the long span of history starting at the time God entrusted Abraham with the religious leadership of mankind, upon successfully completing the test to which God put him. It goes up to the early formation of the Muslim community which believes in the message of Muhammad. Its rise is seen as fulfilment of Abraham's and Ishmael's prayers while they were laying the foundations of the Ka'bah. Thus, it is the Muslim community that is the legitimate heir to God's religion, solely by virtue of their faith in God and by their true and sincere following of Abraham's teachings. Those who depart from it, choosing to turn away from Abraham's faith in God's absolute

### Building the Ka'bah

*We made the House [i.e. the Ka'bah] a resort for mankind and a sanctuary: Make the place where Abraham stood as a place of prayer.' We assigned to Abraham and Ishmael the task of purifying My House for those who walk around it, those who sojourn there for meditation and those who bow down and prostrate themselves in prayer. (125)*

The Sacred House, the Ka'bah, was defiled by the Arabs of the Quraysh who were supposed to be its trusted caretakers and custodians. They harassed and persecuted the believers and drove them out of Makkah. Yet God wanted this House to be a sanctuary to which people of all races resort. In there people should find peace and security for all.

The Arabs had been directed to establish "the place where Abraham stood", which is a reference to the whole area surrounding the Ka'bah, as a place for prayer, which makes its subsequent designation as a qiblah, a spot towards which Muslims turn in Prayer, a very natural progression raising no objections from anyone. After all, it had been the very first place to which Muslims, the legitimate heirs of Abraham's monotheistic religion, had turned in their prayer, because it had been dedicated to God and to no one else. Abraham and Ishmael, two pious and sincere servants of God, had been charged with cleansing it and preparing it for pilgrims who would come to it for worship and meditation. They would make no claim to its ownership, nor did they have it in their power to pass such ownership to anyone else. They were mere servants of God Almighty and keepers of His sacred and revered House.

*Abraham said, 'Lord, make this a land of security and make provisions of fruits for those of its people who believe in God and the Last Day.' God said, 'And as for he who disbelieves, I shall let him enjoy life for a while and then I shall drive him to suffering through the fire; and what a terrible end!' (126)*

While still pleading for the House to be made a universal place of peace and security for posterity, Abraham has clearly heeded God's earlier admonition, as we now find him making the exception that only the believers should receive God's favour.

The surah then goes on to paint a lively picture of Abraham and Ishmael embarking on the job of constructing the House of God and preparing it for worshippers: "*As Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House, [they prayed]: 'Our Lord, accept this from us; You are the One that hears all and knows all. (127) Our Lord, make us surrender ourselves to You, and make out of our offspring a community that will surrender itself to You. Show us our ways of worship and accept our repentance; You are the One who accepts repentance, the Merciful. (128) Our Lord, send them a Messenger from among themselves who shall declare to them Your revelations, and instruct them in the Book and in wisdom, and purify them. You are Mighty and Wise.' (129)''*

two Prophets expressly request God to make out of their offspring a nation that would serve God, as the word 'Muslim', (meaning one who submits himself) implies. The prayer makes clear that the Muslim nation, followers of Muhammad, are the recognized heirs to the legacy of Abraham; that is, the leadership of mankind and the custody of the House of God in Makkah. This, in turn, is an affirmation of the Muslims' right, over the idolater Arabs, to the Ka'bah, as well as of the latter's precedence over Jerusalem as the qiblah faced by Muslims in Prayer throughout the world.

Jews and Christians who claim a religious bond with Abraham, and the Quraysh Arabs who claim an ancestral relationship to Ishmael, are informed in clear, simple language that Abraham excluded the wrongdoers among his offspring from his covenant with God, and prayed for guidance and salvation only for the believers among them. Furthermore, when Abraham and Ishmael embarked on building a place dedicated to the worship of God on earth, they asked Him to make a nation from their offspring, the Muslim nation that would submit to God; and to send them a messenger of their own, Muhammad, to instruct them in the true religion of God. These are the real and legitimate heirs of the legacy of Abraham and Ishmael.

Then comes a brief interjection condemning those who dispute Muhammad's role as a prophet and messenger and argue about the essence of divine faith: "*Who but a foolish person would turn away from the faith of Abraham? We raised him high in this life, and in the life to come he shall be among the righteous. (130) When his Lord said to him, 'Submit yourself', he said, 'I have submitted myself to the Lord of all the worlds.' (131) Abraham enjoined the same on his children, and so did Jacob, saying, 'My children, God has given you the purest faith. Do not let death overtake you before you have submitted yourselves to God.' (132)*

The essence of the religion of Abraham is pure submission to God, or Islam, which only a foolish or obstinate person would abandon or reject. Abraham and Jacob, or Israel as he is otherwise called, were determined to hand it down to their offspring, in perpetuity. This religion had been chosen for them by God Himself, as an act of grace and a boon to them; it was not of their making, and a better choice they would not have. With the coming of Muhammad and the message of Islam, a fresh opportunity opened up for the Arabs and the Jews of Arabia to fulfil the wishes of their forefathers from whom they were proud to claim descent.

### A Faith to Pass to Your Children

At this point we come to witness another awesome scene: Jacob on his deathbed, giving his last words of wisdom and advice to his children, gathered around him: "*Were you present when death approached Jacob? He asked his children, 'Whom will you*

one generation to the next, the human lot is improved and life is preserved. This natural and necessary human process has been a target for criticism and attack, while Islam recognizes its importance, and promotes it through its law of inheritance, so that it serves human society to the full.

The misguided efforts made in some societies to undermine this natural progression in fact try to suppress human nature altogether. Such efforts betray short-sightedness, inhumanity and arbitrary methods in tackling social and moral ills. Unless remedied, these will lead to the fragmentation and destruction of society. However, solutions that run contrary to human nature will inevitably end in failure. What is needed is a solution that rectifies deviation and social ills without contradicting human nature. Such methods can only be adopted and made to work within a framework of divine guidance and faith. They require a profound and enlightened understanding of human nature and the human mind, and an unbiased outlook, free of all grudges and destructive tendencies.

The answer to Abraham's question, "*And what of my descendants?*" reiterates an already stated major principle: that religious leadership and authority are granted purely on merit, in reward for sincere faith and diligent work. They are not inherited through ancestral lineage. God said: "*My covenant does not apply to the wrongdoers.*"

"Wrongdoing" takes various forms: it might be directed at oneself, by associating partners with God, or it might be oppression directed at fellow human beings. The leadership denied to wrongdoers includes all the meanings covered by the Arabic term imām, which include prophethood, political authority, and the leading of congregational prayers. Equity and justice make up the foremost qualification for this lofty vocation, and no one who deviates from these qualities deserves any form of leadership, in its widest sense.

This is the clear essence of the covenant made with Abraham. According to it, the Jews, as a result of their repeated wrongdoing, self-indulgence and waywardness, could never have an exclusive monopoly of the leadership of mankind. Similarly, and for the same reasons, some so-called Muslims today would also be barred from that covenant.

Islam gives no credence to ties or relationships not based on faith and sincere action. It places a sharp distinction between one generation and another when the latter one deviates from the faith, despite their common ancestry. Indeed, according to Islam, faith can separate father and son, and man and wife. Thus the Arabs who adopted Islam are distinguished from those who did not, just as Jews and Christians who believed in the religion of Abraham, Moses and Jesus are distinguished from those who deviated from them. Ancestors and offspring only become one family or nation when they are all believers united by the same faith, regardless of colour and geographic or ethnic origins.

Not only does this vivid account take the reader right into the scene of the action, but it also surrounds him with the mood and feeling of the occasion. It was a labour of love and devotion that those two pious people undertook, dedicated to God Almighty and carried out in expectation and hope that He would accept it and be pleased with it.

We almost hear the tone and music of their prayer, and we feel the atmosphere of heart-felt appeal to God. This is a special characteristic of the Qur'anic style which brings a scene of an event long gone as though it is taking place here and now, right in front of us. In their prayer we cannot fail to note the sort of humility, devotion and profound faith that are worthy of prophets who understand the importance of true faith in this world. Such characteristics the Qur'an tries to teach the advocates of faith and instil it in their hearts.

"*Our Lord, accept this from us; You are the One that hears all and knows all.*" (127) Their first aim is that their labour, which is dedicated purely to God, should be accepted by Him. Hence, they offer it with humility, hoping to earn God's pleasure through it, pinning their hopes on the fact that God listens to their prayers and knows their feelings and intentions.

"*Our Lord, make us surrender ourselves to You, and make out of our offspring a community that will surrender itself to You. Show us our ways of worship and accept our repentance; You are the One who accepts repentance, the Merciful.*" (128) They turn to God seeking His guidance, fully aware that, without His help and support, they are powerless. Their prayer also shows the intrinsic solidarity of the community of believers over successive generations. "*Make of our offspring a community that will surrender itself to You...*" (128)" This shows not only the fact that faith is the most important aspect in a believer's life, and appreciation of its great blessings, but also the instinctive natural feeling of wishing the best for one's children and descendants. Their main concern was that their offspring should be God-fearing, righteous and obedient to God. So they add a specific request: "*Our Lord, send them a Messenger from among themselves who shall declare to them Your revelations, and instruct them in the Book and in wisdom, and purify them. You are Mighty and Wise.*" (129)

That particular prayer was answered when the Prophet Muhammad, a direct descendant of Abraham and Ishmael, was given his message several centuries later. We note that some time may elapse before God answers a particular prayer. As human beings, we tend to be impatient and want our prayers answered immediately, forgetting that it is for God Almighty to choose how and when they should be answered and fulfilled.

This prayer by Abraham and Ishmael carries particular significance for the debate that was going on between the Muslims and the Jews in Madinah at the time. The

weakness in those arguments and the insidious ulterior motives behind them. The passage is rounded off by presenting Islam as man's comprehensive and universal religion, opposed and rejected only by those who are stubborn and ungrateful: *They say, 'Follow the Jewish faith — or, follow the Christian faith — and you shall be rightly guided.'* Say, 'No. We follow the faith of Abraham, who was truly devoted to God, and was not of those who associated partners with God.' (135) *Say [all of you], 'We believe in God and in what has been revealed to us, and in what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants, and in what was given to Moses and Jesus, and in what all prophets have been given by their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to God we have surrendered ourselves.'* (136) *If they come to believe in the way you believe, they will be rightly guided; but if they turn away, they will be in schism, but God will protect you from them; He hears all and knows all.* (137).

The Prophet is instructed here to confront the Jews and the Christians together with the same challenge, and call upon them equally to revert, together with the Muslims, to the original religion of Abraham, the founding father of the faith of Islam on earth. He was the one to make a covenant with God and he was true to his covenant.

Then the Muslims are called upon to acknowledge and declare an overall unity of faith, from that of Abraham right up to that of Jesus and Muhammad.

The principle of the unity and universality of faith, and the unity of all prophets and messengers all through the ages, is the cornerstone of Islamic faith. It lends legitimacy to the Muslim community's claim to the legacy of Abraham and to the right of trusteeship for God's religion in this world. It is this principle as a fundamental backbone of Islam that gives it its universal characteristic, which brings people together under the same banner, free of all prejudice or discrimination. It makes the Muslim community open to all people in a spirit of genuine love and peace.

This leads to the conclusion that Islam, in its broad, universal sense, is the true guidance. Its followers shall succeed and prosper while its opponents will never find a firm basis to stand upon. On the contrary, they will live in constant turmoil and confusion.

This testimony from none other than God Almighty will give Muslims reassurance and make them proud of their faith and confident that they will overcome setbacks and tribulations and prevail over their enemies. God is on their side and *"will protect you from them; He hears all and knows all."* (137)

The duty of believers is to uphold the faith and take pride in it and wear the distinctive mark of the true servants of God which makes them stand out and surpass all others in the world: *"[This message takes its] hue from God; who can give a better hue than God? Him alone do we worship."* (138) He has given a very distinctive colour to

*worship when I am gone? They replied, 'We will worship your God, the God of your forefathers Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac, the One God. To Him we submit ourselves.'*" (133)

It is indeed a tremendous and solemn occasion. The most important and only issue that concerned Jacob as he drew his last breath was the religion his children were to follow after his death. He was worried about the fate of his legacy and the future of the religion placed in his trust. His children's reply must have been most reassuring and gratifying for him. The chain would not be broken, and the legacy of Abraham was sure to live on for many generations to come.

Jacob asks his children: *"Whom will you worship when I am gone?..."* (133)" He thus tells them why he gathered them, and the issue he wanted to be sure of before his death. It is the trust and the heritage of that blessed house. His children reassure Jacob that they would be true to their trust. Thus, the same heritage of Abraham was safe with Jacob's children, who clearly state that they have submitted themselves to God.

The verse opens with a rhetorical question addressed to the Jews: *"Were you present when death approached Jacob?..."* (133)" It tells them what went on as witnessed by God Himself. They could not question the truth of what had happened or distort it after God has stated what went on.

In the light of these assertions, a clear distinction is established between that bygone generation and the one that was facing Islam in Madinah: *"That community has passed away. Theirs is what they had earned and yours is what you have earned. You shall not be questioned about what they did."* (134)

Every generation has its concerns and characteristics, and the record for which it shall be accountable. A corrupt and heedless generation shall bear no relation to a righteous one. The only durable link between generations of nations is that of faith and belief. From the Islamic point of view, a nation's characteristics are preserved and perpetuated through faith rather than race or blood, and generations are viewed as either believers or unbelievers, with every one seen in the light of their actions and record.

According to Islam, a nation is defined by its faith and beliefs, regardless of its constituent ethnic and racial groups, or how widely spread in the world they are. Having a common race or territory does not make a nation. This approach stems from Islam's universal view of mankind as a single race deriving its unique human qualities from the divine spirit God had breathed into man at the moment of creation, rather than from some acquired physical qualities that are of little concern.

#### The Argument Is Finally Settled

Against this historical background of God's covenant with Abraham, the building of the Ka'bah and the entitlement to the religious heritage of Abraham, the surah takes a closer look at some Jewish and Christian arguments and claims. It exposes the

the message He has chosen to be the last to mankind. It serves as a basis on which to establish an all-embracing human unity, free of all prejudices and fanaticism, giving no special status to any race or colour.

We need to reflect a little here about a unique and highly significant aspect of the Qur'anic mode of expression. The beginning of this verse is a statement made by God: *"This message takes its hue from God; who can give a better hue than God?"* (138) The rest of the verse is a statement by the believers. The Qur'an joins both statements without anything to separate or distinguish one from the other. This is a great honour to the believers when their statement is joined to that of God, indicating their very close link with their Lord. Examples of such highly significant type of expression are numerous in the Qur'an.

The argument is then brought to its climax by posing the ultimate question: *"Say, 'Would you dispute with us about God? He is our Lord and your Lord. To us our deeds shall be credited and to you, your deeds. To Him alone we are devoted.'" (139)*

There can be no room for doubt about God's oneness and sovereignty over all creation. He is the Lord of all of us, and He shall judge everyone by their own deeds. As Muslims, we devote our life and existence totally to God alone. We seek no other beings with or beside Him; and to us, these are incontrovertible and indisputable facts on which the faith of Islam rests.

In terse and forceful language, the surah poses other rhetorical questions regarding the faith of earlier prophets, well known to the Jews and the Christians: *"Do you claim that Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes were Jews or Christians?"* (140) These lived long before Moses, and their faith preceded both Christianity and Judaism. God states the truth about their faith: *"Say: 'Do you know better than God?"* (140) No answer could be offered to such a rhetorical question. Besides, both Jews and Christians knew very well that these Prophets lived long before their faiths. They further have, in their own Scriptures, clear statements speaking of the Prophet who would be sent with a message of the pure monotheistic faith of Abraham, but they suppressed that. Hence, the warning that God is fully aware of what they suppress: *"Who is more wicked than one who suppresses a testimony he has received from God? God is not unmindful of what you do."* (140)

As the surah makes its final, irrefutable argument, showing the great gulf separating Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and his sons from the Jews who were the Prophet's contemporaries, it repeats the verse with which it concluded its discourse about Abraham and his descendants who submitted themselves to God: *"That community has passed away. Theirs is what they earned and yours is what you have earned. You shall not be questioned about what they did."* (141) With this powerful statement, all arguments are brought to their decisive conclusion.