

Surah 2. Al-Baqara

Asad: [Hence,] behold, As-Safa and Al-Marwah are among the symbols set up by God;¹²⁶ and thus, no wrong does he who, having come to the Temple on pilgrimage or on a pious visit, strides to and fro between these two:¹²⁷ for, if one does more good than he is bound to do - behold, God is responsive to gratitude, all-knowing.¹²⁸

Malik: Behold! Safa and Marwah (two hills in the Sacred Mosque) are among the symbols of Allah. So anyone who performs Hajj or Umrah (pilgrimage) to the House, there is no blame if one goes around both of them; and anyone who does good voluntarily should know that surely Allah knows the grateful.
Mustafa Khattab:

Indeed, the hills of Safa and Marwah¹ are among the symbols of Allah. So whoever performs the pilgrimage or minor pilgrimage,² let them walk between the two hills?. And whoever does good willingly, Allah is truly Appreciative, All-Knowing.

Pickthall: Lo! (the mountains) Al-Safa and Al-Marwah are among the indications of Allah. It is therefore no sin for him who is on pilgrimage to the House (of God) or visiteth it, to go around them (as the pagan custom is). And he who doeth good of his own accord (for him), Lo! Allah is Responsive, Aware.

Yusuf Ali: Behold! Safa and Marwa are among the Symbols of Allah. So if those who visit the house in the season or at other times should compass them round it is no sin in them. And if anyone obeyeth his own impulse to good be sure that Allah is He Who recogniseth and knoweth. ^{160 161 162}

Transliteration: Inna alssafa waalmarwata min shaAAairi Allahi faman hajja albayta awi iAAtamara fala junaha AAalayhi an yattawwafa bihima waman tawwawwAAa khayran fainna Allaha shakirun AAaleemun

Author Comments

126 - Lit., "God's symbols". The space between the two low outcrops of rock called As-Safa and Al-Marwah, situated in Mecca in the immediate vicinity of the Ka'bah, is said to have been the scene of Hagar's suffering when Abraham, following God's command, abandoned her and their infant son Ishmael in the desert (see note [102] above). Distraught with thirst and fearing for the life of her child, Hagar ran to and fro between the two rocks and fervently prayed to God for succour: and, finally, her reliance on God and her patience were rewarded by the discovery of a spring - existing to this day and known as the Well of Zamzam - which saved the two from death through thirst. It was in remembrance of Hagar's extreme trial, and of her trust in God, that As-Safa and Al-Marwah had come to be regarded, even in pre-Islamic times, as symbols of faith and patience in adversity: and this explains their mention in the context of the passages which deal with the virtues of patience and trust in God (Razi).

127 - It is in commemoration of Hagar's running in distress between As-Safa and Al-Marwah that the

Mecca pilgrims are expected to walk, at a fast pace, seven times between these two hillocks. Because of the fact that in pre-Islamic times certain idols had been standing there, some of the early Muslims were reluctant to perform a rite which seemed to them to be associated with recent idolatry (Razi, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas). The above verse served to reassure them on this score by pointing out that this symbolic act of remembrance was much older than the idolatry practiced by the pagan Quraysh.

128 - From the phrase "if one does more good than he is bound to do", read in conjunction with "no wrong does he who..." (or, more literally, "there shall be no blame upon him who..."), some of the great Islamic scholars - e.g., Imam Abu Hanifah - conclude that the walking to and fro between As-Safa and Al-Marwah is not one of the obligatory rites of pilgrimage but rather a supererogatory act of piety (see Zamakhshari and Razi). Most scholars, however, hold the view that it is an integral part of the pilgrimage.

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Asafa and Marwah are two hills near the Ka'bah in Mecca.

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Known as Asajj and 'umrah to the Sacred Mosque in Mecca.

160 - The virtue of patient perseverance in faith leads to the mention of two symbolic monuments of that virtue. These are the two little hills of Safa and Marwa now absorbed in the city of Mecca, and close to the well of Zam-zam. Here, according to tradition, the lady Hajar, mother of the infant Ismail, prayed for water in the parched desert, and in her eager quest round these hills, she found her prayer answered and saw the Zam-zam spring. Unfortunately the Pagan Arabs had placed a male and a female idol here, and their gross and superstitious rites caused offence to the early Muslims. They felt some hesitation in going round these places during the Pilgrimage. As a matter of fact they should have known that the Ka'ba (the House of God) had been itself defiled with idols, and was sanctified again by the purity of Muhammad's life and teaching. The lesson is that the most sacred things may be turned to the basest uses; that we are not therefore necessarily to ban a thing misused; that if our intentions and life are pure, God will recognise them even if the world cast stones at us because of some evil associations which they join with what we

do, or with the people we associate with, or with the places which claim our reverence.

161 - The House - the Sacred Mosque, the Ka'ba. The Season of regular Hajj culminates in the visit to Arafat on the ninth day of the month of Zul-hajj, followed by the circumambulation of the Ka'ba. A visit to the Sacred Mosque and the performance of the rites of pilgrimage at any other time is called an Umra. The symbolic rites are the same in either case, except that the Arafat rites are omitted in the Umra. The Safa and Marwa are included among the Monuments, as pointing to one of the highest of Muslim virtues.

162 - The impulse should be to Good; if once we are sure of this, we must obey it without hesitation, whatever people may say.

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