

Surah 2. Al-Baqara

Asad: They will ask thee about fighting in the sacred month.²⁰² Say: "Fighting in it is an awesome thing; but turning men away from the path of God and denying Him, and [turning them away from] the Inviolable House of Worship and expelling its people therefrom - [all this] is yet more awesome in the sight of God, since oppression is more awesome than killing." [Your enemies] will not cease to fight against you till they have turned you away from your faith, if they can. But if any of you should turn away from his faith and die as a denier of the truth - these it is whose works will go for nought in this world and in the life to come; and these it is who are destined for the fire, therein to abide.

Malik: They ask you about war in the Sacred Month. Tell them: "fighting in this month is a heinous offence; but to prevent from the path of Allah, to deny Him, to prevent access and expel His worshippers from the Sacred Mosque is a more severe crime, since mischief is worse than killing in His sight. As for unbelievers: they will not cease fighting until they succeed in turning you back from your religion if they can; and if any of you turns back from his religion and dies as an unbeliever, his deeds will become void in this life and in the hereafter. He will be the inmate of hellfire, to live in there forever.

Mustafa Khattab:

They¹ ask you ?O Prophet? about fighting in the sacred months.² Say, "Fighting during these months is a great sin. But hindering ?others? from the Path of Allah, rejecting Him, and expelling the worshippers from the Sacred Mosque is ?a? greater ?sin? in the sight of Allah. For persecution³ is far worse than killing. And they will not stop fighting you until they turn you away from your faith—if they can. And whoever among you renounces their own faith and dies a disbeliever, their deeds will become void in this life and in the Hereafter. It is they who will be the residents of the Fire. They will be there forever."⁴

Pickthall: They question thee (O Muhammad) with regard to warfare in the sacred month. Say: Warfare therein is a great (transgression), but to turn (men) from the way of Allah, and to disbelieve in Him and in the Inviolable Place of Worship, and to expel his people thence, is a greater with Allah; for persecution is worse than killing. And they will not cease from fighting against you till they have made you renegades from your religion, if they can. And whoso becometh a renegade and dieth in his disbelief: such are they whose works have fallen both in the world and the Hereafter. Such are rightful owners of the Fire: they will abide therein.

Yusuf Ali: They ask thee concerning fighting in the Prohibited Month. Say: "Fighting therein is a grave (offence); but graver is it in the sight of Allah to prevent access to the path of Allah to deny Him to prevent access to the Sacred Mosque and drive out its members. Tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter. Nor will they cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith if they can. And if any of you turn back from their faith and die in unbelief their works will bear no fruit in this life and in the Hereafter; they will be Companions of the Fire and will abide therein." ^{237 238 239}

Transliteration: Yasaloonaka AAani alshshahri alharami qitalin feehi qul qitalun feehi kabeerun wasaddun AAan sabeeli Allahi wakufrun bihi waalmasjidi alharami waikhraju ahlihi minhu akbaru AAinda Allahi waalfitnatu akbaru mina alqatli wala yazaloonu yuqatiloona hatta yaruddookum AAan deenikum ini istataAAoo waman yartadid minkum AAan deenihii fayamut wahuwa kafirun faolaika habitat aAAamaluhum fee alddunya waalakhirati waolaika ashabu alnnari hum feeha khaidoona

Author Comments

202 - For an explanation of the "sacred months", see note [171] above.

28912 -

The pagans of Mecca.

28913 -

See footnote for 2:194.

28914 -

Persecuting Muslims to abandon their faith.

28915 -

While many traditional scholars maintain that apostates are to be first invited to re-enter the fold of Islam then executed if the invitation is turned down, some traditional and modern scholars (like Sufyân Ath-Thawri, the late Grand Imâm of Al-Azhar Sheikh Ma'mûd Shaltût, and Dr. Jamal Badawi) are of the opinion that the Quran (2:256) guarantees freedom of religion and (2:217) promises no worldly punishment for leaving Islam. It is reported in a ?adîth collected by Imâm Muslim that a man came to the Prophet (?) in Medina and retracted the allegiance he had pledged to him (?)—leaving Islam. The Prophet (?) did not

punish the man. The narrations that command the killing of apostates refer only to those who fight against Muslims—so they are killed for treason, not for apostasy. Other a?ādīth are meant to deter those who conspired to accept Islam then leave it soon after only to shake the faith of early Muslims, as mentioned in 3:72.

237 - Prohibited Month: See ii. 194, n. 209.

238 - The intolerance and persecution of the Pagan clique at Mecca caused untold hardships to the holy Messenger of Islam and his early disciples. They bore all with meekness and long-suffering patience until the holy one permitted them to take up arms in self-defence. Then they were twitted with breach of the custom about Prohibited Months, though they were driven to fight during that period against their own feeling in self defence. But their enemies not only forced them to engage in actual warfare, but interfered with their conscience, persecuted them and their families, openly insulted and denied God, kept out the Muslim Arabs from the Sacred Mosque, and exiled them. Such violence and intolerance are deservedly called worse than slaughter.

239 - Cf. ii. 191, 193, where a similar phrase occurs. Fitna - trial, temptation, as in ii. 102; or tumult, sedition, oppression, as here; M.M.A., H.G.S., and M.P. translate "persecution" in this passage, which is also legitimate, seeing that persecution is the suppression of some opinion by violence, force, or threats.

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