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# GENUS AND ORIGIN OF HUMAN RIGHTS YAHYA IBRAHEEM YERO UNIVERSITY KASHERE, GOMBE STATE, NIGERIA.

A PAPER PRESENTED AT A NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES ORGANISED BY CONTEMPORARY FIQH RESEARCH UNIT (CFRU), KULLIYAH OF ISLAMIC REVEALED KNOWLEDGE AND HUMAN SCIENCES (KIRKHS), INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA.

### **ABSTRACT**

Problem Statement: It is claimed by the west and their surrogates that the world first derived the concept of basic human rights from the Magna Carter of Britain which was signed in 1215, that is, about 582 years after the advent of Islam. In reality, the West had no concept of human and civil rights before the 17th century and it was not until the end of the 18th century that the concept took on practical meaning in the constitution of U.S.A. and France. Later in the middle of the 20th century, the UN made a declaration of universal human rights but in spite of all the UN resolutions, human rights are continuously violated and trampled upon.

Research Objective: The objective of this research paper is to put the historical accounts/origin of these rights in proper perspective. These rights were given by Allah to the people and have preceded – by about 6 centuries – the ones given to them by the Magna Carter of 1215, the Petition of Rights of 1628, the Bill of Rights of 1689, the American Declaration of Independence of 1776, the French Declaration of Human and Citizens Right of 1789, the Soviet Union Declaration of 1336 which was reiterated in 1977, the League of Nations endorsement of them in 1919, the Atlantic Charter of 1941, and the Dumbarton International Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. The rights given by Allah to His servants cannot be compared in any way with the rights sanctioned by the UN, let alone be superseded.

Research Methodology: The method adopted in this research is descriptive and analytical in nature. It examines and analyses relevant

data on the origin and types of human rights as declared by Islam on the one hand, and the West and their international institutions on the other.

Significance of the Research: The significance of this research lies in proclaiming and reaffirming to the world that Islam is ahead of the West and their International Institutions in terms of declaring basic universal human rights to humanity. And that the so-called UN declaration of human rights is nothing but a slogan to perpetuate Western imperialism. The codification of these rights is pregnant with deception, hypocrisy, double-standards, and insincerity .

Expected Finding: It is hoped that at the end of this research, it will be clear to objective minds that the UN Charter on human rights is a woeful failure and full of deficiencies. The UN has failed to monitor its implementation or check the excesses of its bullying members. And that the world stands to gain a lot by upholding the declaration of Islam on human rights.

Keywords: Concepts, Genus, Origin, Human Rights, IHR, UDHR, Qur'an, Allah

### **INTRODUCTION:**

It is indeed a sad paradox that Islam and Muslims have been / are being accused of violating Human Rights (HR) at a time when Muslims whether as peoples, governments, individuals or groups, are being subjected to all kinds of aggression / annihilation and their fundamental rights and freedom are being grossly violated. It is clear that the UN, the governments of Western and European nations and their politicians are using double standards. Whenever they deal with non-Muslims they seek justice, preach diplomacy and show respect to (HR) charters. But whenever they deal with Muslim governments, countries, individuals, or groups; oppression / repression in tolerated / permitted and aggression / violence is justified. The tragedies of Bosnia, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Egypt and Nigeria (Boko Haram) are but few examples.1

### CONCEPTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

In Islamic Scheme of things, human rights (HR) are bestowed to humans by the Divine Being (Allah) NOT as a response to the horrors of oppression, war and genocide, but because the Divine Being has decided to honour His servants / creatures (Qur'an 17:70; 2:30 & 34). Since Islamic Human Rights (IHR) have been bestowed by Allah,

they are not just conferred on paper for the sake of exhibition and denied or violated in actual life when the exhibition is over. They are not like philosophical concepts which have no sanctions behind them. IHR are sanctioned by Allah, as such whoever violates or pays lipservice to them, the verdict of the Qur'an for such is clear and unequivocal (Qur'an 5:44; 5:45; & 5:47). These rights are therefore permanent, perpetual and eternal. They are not subject to alterations or modifications, nor can they be repealed.2

On the other hand, the United Nations adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 was nothing but a Political response to the horrors of war, oppression and genocide; and a mere cosmopolitan dream because they are declarations on paper. They are not actually given to the people in real life. They have no sanctions behind them, physical or moral to enforce them. Human Rights are being violated on a daily basis by America, Israel, Britain, their allies and their surrogates at different places around the globe such as in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya, Palestine, Egypt, Nigeria (the Boko Haram extra-judicial killing that was and is still being perpetrated by the Police and the Soldiers), etc. In all these violations of HR, the UN has been a helpless spectator. She lacks the power, the capacity and the means to exercise effective control and sanction on any of the bullying countries.3

### GENUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

Islam does not restrict Human Rights to the geographical limits of any particular place or area because HR is a universal phenomenon. For this reason, Islam has laid down some universal fundamental rights to humanity as a whole which are to be respected and guaranteed under all circumstances. The fundamental difference between IHR and UDHR adopted by the United Nations General Assembly is that the former are binding on every Muslim State while the latter are NOT binding on any state or country.4 Some of these rights are:

- a. Right to Life: The right to life has been given to man by Islam by virtue of being a human being regardless of which religion, nationality or race he belongs to.
- b. Right to Security of Life: In Islam, life is sacred whether it belongs to a Muslim, a Jew, a Christian, a Hindu, a Polytheist or whatever. The first and foremost basic right guaranteed to man by

Islam is right to security of life. Spilling of human blood without legal justification is prohibited. If anyone violates the sanctity of human blood by killing a soul without justification, the Qur'an equates it to the killing of entire mankind (Qur'an 5:32). In another verse it says:

Do not kill a soul which Allah Has made sacred except through the due process of the Law (Qur'an 6:151).

This is the position of Islam with regard to human life - all life - without discrimination. But the world is a living witness to the atrocities committed against humanity by the Western and European countries, the so-called vanguards and promoters of HR around the globe. Hundreds and thousands of Palestinians were and still are hunted down like wild animals by the Israeli weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and other chemical weapons. Similarly, the world saw how America and her allies invaded, occupied and devastated Iraq under the pretext of searching for WMD and the global war against terror. We have also seen how innocent citizens were hunted down like animals in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Egypt (Muslim Brothers) under the guise of fighting terrorists.

c. Right to Freedom: From Islamic point of view, nothing takes greater importance than the right to freedom. Evidence in support of this is found in two Qur'anic verses (Qur'an 2:191 & 2:217). These verses have given a clear principle that persecution – which means a denial of freedom is a far worse and greater offence than killing, which is a denial of the right to life. This principle leads to a logical conclusion that freedom is more important than life. That is why in another verse (Qur'an 2:256), Allah stresses that there is no compulsion in religion.5

We would like to ask the UN the following questions: Are the Palestinians, the Afghans, the Pakistanis free from persecutions? Are the Muslim women who want to exercise their freedom to wear hijab(veil) and niqab(veil) free from persecution in Western and European countries? Are Muslims given the freedom to practice their religion without restriction and molestations? Or are Muslims not human beings who equally deserve to be given freedom and human dignity?

d. Right to Justice: Islam commands that justice must be done to all and sundry as human beings irrespective of their religion, language, colour, country or race. Allah has commanded people to be just and to stick to justice and fair play even if it were at the expense of their own personal interest or pleasure (Qur'an 4:135; 5:2; 5:8) .6 Islam is against selective or subjective justice.

Thus, the type of justice demanded by Islam is justice without border, justice that is anchored on piety and Allah's reverence. Islamic justice does not discriminate against anybody by reason of his/her race, religion, colour, language or country. Muslims are commanded to treat even their sworn enemies equitably. Islamic justice is therefore, vehemently against double-standards. The type of justice available to Heads of State and Government is the same justice that is available to the tails of the State.7

Can the UN and the so-called International Community show us any example of this type of equitable justice given to Muslims--including minors--who have been incarcerated at the Guantanamo Bay for more than ten years without trial, in particular?

No. The cumulative evidence against the UN and the so-called International Community is that, the Palestinians have been systematically and politically denied justice in their own land for more than six decades due to the heavy presence of and occupation of their land by the Israelis. The same is the case of those innocent Muslims who have been unjustly arrested and thrown behind bars at the Guantanamo Penitentiary by the American government. They refused to take them to court for trial because they have failed to establish any concrete charges against them. Yet, they are still detained unjustifiably.

Besides, what can the UN and the International Community say regarding their insistence on bringing leaders of African and Asian countries who have committed crimes against humanity to justice, while they at the same time, allow leaders of other countries, such as U.S.A., U.K., Israel, France, etc who have also committed more heinous and horrendous crimes against humanity to move about freely without bringing them to justice? For instance, Israeli government has used chemical weapons against the Palestinians children and women. American government and her allies have planned and carried out the attack on World Trade Centre (WTC), the Pentagon and Pennsylvania on September 11, (9/11) 2001, in which thousands of American citizens have been killed. In fact, more than two thousand military intelligence and industry professionals do not believe the official U.S.

government account of 9/11. They do not believe that the attack was executed by the Muslims in general or Al-Qaeda in particular. They all believe that it was an inside job carried out by the U.S government against its own citizens in order to have justifications (false ones of curse) to not only occupy, plunder, and devastate Muslim countries; but to also kill and maim Muslims.8

What is more revealing is the fact that, Robin Cook, a former British Foreign Secretary Inter-Services Intelligence has said: "There is no Al-Qaeda. The so-called Al-Qaeda that we see are actually Kharjees along with Mossad, CIA and RAW led and trained mercenary gangs like TTP who pose as Islamic Jihadists, and create justification for global information war and propaganda to launch a new war against another Muslim country"9

e. Right to Equality / Equality before the Law:

Some Western/European writers and scholars such as Dacey and Koproske (2008)10 and their Muslim puppets such as Khaled Abou El-Fadl (2003)11 have a penchant for condemning and criticizing Islamic Shari'ah that it does not give equal rights, treatment and consideration to women, non-Muslims and apostates.

Dacey and Koproske have claimed, while quoting (Schacht 1964, 126), that "in classical Islamic Shari'ah, when a woman commits apostasy she may be coerced through imprisonment and beatings to return to the fold, unlike the male apostates for whom the punishment is death"

On this accusation, this writer would like to quote the primary sources of the Shari'ah that deal with the issue of apostasy irrespective of whether it was committed by a man or a woman. The Qur'an says:

How shall Allah guide those who reject Faith after they accepted it and bore witness that the Apostle

was True and the clear signs had come unto them.

But Allah guides not the people unjust. For such the reward is that on them rests the curse of Allah. of His Angels, and of all mankind, Abiding therein forever. The penalty will not be lightened for them. nor will respite be their lot. Except for those who repent after that and make amends; for indeed

Allah is Forging and Merciful, (Qur'an 3:86-89)

cf also Qur'an 2:161-162

So, the allegation that the Shari'ah denies equal rights for women before the law is a false one. There is a Prophetic Hadith narrated by Bukhari that says "Whoever commits apostasy should be killed" be he a man or a woman. But this punishment is not applicable to those who repent or were compelled to apostatise because of the following Qur'anic verse (Qur'an 16:106).12

They also claimed that with regard to courtroom testimony and inheritance, a woman is counted as half a man. On this allegation also, this writer responds as follows:

Their accusation is directed at Qur'an 2:282. However, their accusation is baseless because the verse is only applicable in financial / business transactions. It has no applicability or relevance in other sectors of human endeavour. In fact, in certain areas which are considered to be the exclusive preserve of women, such as determination of virginity or its otherwise, pregnancy, commencement and or cessation of menses, delivering an alive or dead baby, etc; the testimony / evidence of women on these issues is superior and more reliable than the testimony of men.

Besides, recent scientific research has testified to the validity of the above Qur'anic law (Qur'an 2:282) as being perfectly natural. A UPI report quoted a Soviet scientist, Dr. Vladimir KonovaLov saying that men have greater ability to memorize and process mathematical information than women, but females are better with words.13

Similar remarks were also made by Professor H.J. Eysench, the inventor of Intelligence Quotient, (I.Q) tests about the second – ratedness of women.14 Another proof of women's second-ratedness is the testimony given by Hannah, (Latin: Anna, English: Anne), the maternal grandmother of Jesus Christ, the son of Mary in Qur'an 2:228.

So, the claim that classical Shari'ah has denied equal status / rights to women is not a strange or bizarre thing since renowned scientists have also established the validity of this law. Interestingly, even before the Shari'ah and the scientists submission on this issue, the maternal grandmother of Jesus Christ, the son of Mary had, long before this time, established the superiority of men over women.

On the issue of inheritance, we would like the Western scholars and their surrogates in Muslim countries to know that, these two Qur'anic verses (Qur'anic 4:11 & 4:176) that have bearing on the distribution of the estate of the deceased are not absolutely applicable in all circumstances and conditions because they have some exceptions by the provisions of the Qur'an itself. It is not always that a man gets double / twice the share of a woman. It all depends on the degree of closeness / affinity of each heir to the deceased, the number of surviving heirs, whether the presence of one heir will affect other heirs or not and so on. In fact, there are many instances in which men and women get the same share of inheritance from the estate of the deceased, while in some instances women even get more shares than men. But we have never heard these detractors praising or applauding Islam for that

For instance in Qur'an 4:11, the father is a man and the mother is a woman, but in spite of that, Islam clearly states that each of them will receive one- sixth of the total property left behind by the deceased, if the latter has a surviving issue (whether male or female).15Another example is Qur'an 4:12. According to this verse, if a deceased is survived by two or more brothers and sisters from the same mother, they could only inherit one-third of the whole estate and share it equally among themselves. In this case, the man and the woman will each receive the same share. Double share will NOT be given to the man.16

Another example that belies the accusations of the critics of Islamic Shari'ah is, when a deceased is survived by a Wife, a Father, a Mother, a Daughter and a Grand Daughter (from a deceased son) as his heirs. The Qur'anic share for each of the five inheritors is: Wife 1/8, Father 1/6, Mother 1/6, Daughter 1/2, and Grand Daughter 1/6. We can see from this Qur'anic provision that the Mother and the Grand Daughter even though they are women, they still got as much share as the Father who is a man. What is more interesting is the share of the Daughter even though she too is a woman, yet she got a share that is three times bigger than that of the Father. Let us illustrate this fact with figures .

Supposing the entire estate of the deceased was valued at N27, 000, 000.00 only. Going by the stipulation of the Qur'an, the Wife will receive N3,000,000; the Father N4,000,000; the Mother N4,000,000; the Grand Daughter N4,000,000; while the Daughter receives

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N12,000,000.17 Now what can the critics of Islamic Shari'ah say on this and similar distributions?

On the issue of non-Muslim citizens of the Islamic State, be they Jews, Christians, Magians or Ancestor-worshipers etc, as far as Islam is concerned their rights to equality before the law has been very well expressed by Ali bn Abi Talib, the fourth Caliph of Islam when he said:

They (non-Muslims) have accepted our protection only because their lives may be like our lives and their properties like our properties.18

In other words, the lives and properties of non- Muslim citizens of the Islamic State is as sacred and inviolable as the lives and properties of Muslims. Can the UN guaranty this right-equality before the law-to the Palestinians in their relations with the Israelis or the Israeli government? As far as the Shari'ah is concerned, we are all the descendants of one father and one mother (Qur'an 49:13) as such, there is no basis for discrimination or segregation whatsoever except on the basis of piety. If not for want of space, we could have responded to other accusations made by these critics against the Shari'ah, but the few examples we have given suffice for this paper.

Now let us turn our search light on the West and their international institutions to see whether there is equality before the law between Western countries and other countries of the world, most especially Muslim countries. We shall take only one issue as a case study and that is, possession of nuclear weapons / bombs.

# COUNTRIES WITH STOCKPILES OF NUCLEAR BOMBS S/N COUNTRY STOCK YEAR

- .1
- .2
- .3
- 4
- .5

.6 .7 .8 9 Russia U.S.A U.KFrance China Israel Pakistan India 80,000 North Korea 24,000 15,000 500 450 200 40 65 Not stated 1949 1945 1957 1960 1964 Unknown 1998 1998 2006

Source: Abubakar Siddiq 19

The world is a living witness to the fact that the UN and the so-called International Community are insisting that other countries of the world and in particular Muslim countries should not be allowed to possess nuclear weapons. And that if they have them already, then

they must destroy them. But what qualifies those countries that we have seen in the above table to possess these weapons? Is it because they are super countries, and their people are super humans? Or is it a clear case of double standards? What disqualifies the other countries from possessing these weapons? Are they considered as sub-humans? Where is the equality before the law that they always make noise about? If they insist on denying other countries of the world the right to possess these weapons, then we say to them ''charity begins at home.'' Let them, the so-called 'agenda-setters', the so-called 'super powers', first and foremost, destroy their own weapons before they demand other countries to do the same, so that no country in the world would be allowed to have them. Otherwise the effort to prevent other countries from having these weapons will not be successful.

## f. Right to Freedom of Belief, Conscience and Conviction:

Islam does not compel people to change their faith and believe in Islam under compulsion. Islam gives the right to freedom of belief, conscience and conviction to human beings. Allah has never allowed the imposition of beliefs, conscience and convictions on people (Qur'an 2:256; 10:99; 109:1-6; 16:125). Those who do not accept Islam are recognized, their decisions are respected, and no moral, social, economic, or political pressure will be put on them to change their minds.

But the question is, is there anything similar to the above Islamic stand on freedom from democrats in general and Western democracies in particular? What we saw and heard is that there is compulsion in democracy and that has been demonstrated by the former American President, George Walter Bush who divided the people of the world into only two camps—those'' with us'' or ''against us''. There is no neutrality: you either pitch your tent with the ''aggressors'' (i.e. the terrorists) or with the ''aggrieved'' (i.e. the U.S.).

On the basis of this type of democracy which refuses to accept neutrality, and refuses to recognize 'the other' world view, that was why the Islamic Salvation Front was deliberately prevented from forming a government in Algeria despite the fact that have won a free and fair election in their country. The only plausible reason why the Western world frustrated their effort was because they would form an Islamic government. The same thing was done to the HAMAS of

Palestine and the Muslim Brothers of Egypt. Western countries, most especially the U.S. used their puppets and allies to stifle the formation of government by these democratically elected parties.

These false preachers of democracy are the same countries that declared total war on terrorist networks around the globe as a result of which Afghanistan was blown with fire power that exceeds those used on Japan or Dresden in Germany during the World War II. Within few months, Iraq was connected to the attack through false intelligence report. And the world refused to ask intelligent questions. The world believed 'the two big liars' just because we heard what they said from the CNN, VOA and BBC backed by reports from the super- intelligent organisations like the CIA and MI5. But to the embarrassment of all, the whole junk was faked and at the late hour, after murdering thousands of lives, destroying many properties and causing international chaos, it was discovered that there is nothing intelligent in all that was peddled around as fact. 20

These same set of nations, being in control of the Media, are misinforming the world about the true events that are taking place in order to accomplish their policy of subjugation, enslavement and total control of other peoples' lives. They have the largest stock of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), yet they tag others who have very little or are struggling to possess / develop some of such weapons with names like 'rogue nations', 'axis of evil',' reactionary regimes', and or 'Islamic fascists'.21

These Western countries and their allies are the same countries that have colonized one-third of the world in the past. Their hands are stained with the blood of those people who resisted their domination. They are the same countries that have economically under-developed the subjugated third world countries and engineered their political instability to such an extent that they remained perpetually under siege. They are the same people who siphon, from the third world countries, more than ten times the amount they give out to the subjugated and defenceless nations as loan.

### **ORIGIN OF HUMAN RIGHTS:**

Secular human rights are given to people by state powers, national legislative assemblies, regional and international bodies such as the UN, as well as by dictators. However, these secular human rights granted to people by these bodies and dictators could be withdrawn,

denied, or violated at will in the same manner in which they were conferred.

But according to Islam, the origin of human rights is Allah, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, the Omnipresent, and the Originator of the heavens and earth. He bestowed rights to human beings—Muslims and non-Muslims alike—because they are His vicegerents on earth (Qur'an 2:30 and 34). He accorded them inherent rights, the like of which could not be found anywhere. It is therefore incorrect to claim that the origin of human rights goes back to the Magna Carter of Britain which was signed in 1215 C.E., that is, about six hundred years after the revelation of the Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). As such, Islam is ahead of the West and their international institutions in terms of, not only declaring but safeguarding, basic universal human rights to humanity without discrimination.

However, rights in Islam begin with the rights of Allah over His creatures, followed by the rights of His Messengers, then the rights of man upon his own self, then the rights of other people over man, then the rights of other countless creatures of Allah which have been harnessed for and subjected to man.22

The primary and foremost right of Allah on man is that man should have faith in Him alone, acknowledge His authority and associate none with Him (Qur'an 3:173 &193; 8:2; 5:17; 6:73; 112:1-4).

The second right of Allah on man is to accept and follow His guidance—the code He has revealed for man—(Qur'an 2:2-5; 3:20; 4:174-175).

The third right of Allah on man is to obey Him honestly and unreservedly (Qur'an 3:32; 4:13; 5:92).

The fourth right of Allah on man is to worship Him alone. This is rendered by offering Salat (prayer) and all other forms of 'Ibadaat (worships) (Qur'an 6:102; 7:59; 4:36; 51:56-57).

The above rights and obligations precede all other rights and as such they are discharged even at the cost of some sacrifice of other rights and duties. Allah's rights are immediately followed by the rights of His Messengers who were the touch-bearers of divine guidance to their respective peoples, communities, and nations. They were the only intermediaries between Allah and His servants. They are

examples of perfection, models of virtue, bearers of the rays of illumination and light, and leaders for the caravan of civilization through the course of time. Allah selected them to be guides and reformers. He chose and trained them Himself. He honoured them with the most perfect attributes and made them leaders in matters pertaining to religious and worldly life (Qur'an 21:73). Thus, they are the best of creation and the cream of mankind. They impart to people Allah's orders, warn them of His wrath and punishment, and guide them to that which will bring them happiness in this world and in the hereafter. Therefore, their right is to be unconditionally obeyed, in all matters, at all times, by all their respective communities and nations (Qur'an 4:64). Their rights are then followed by the rights of man upon himself.

It is important to briefly explain the rights of man upon himself. It is a fact of life that man is more cruel and unjust to himself than to any other being. This may seem astonishing, but it is true in the life of some people who have the tendency to go to extremes due to maladjustment and disequilibrium in their everyday life. That is why the Shari'ah clearly declares that man's own self has certain rights upon him. As a result of which, total self-denial, self-persecution, and suicide are forbidden because man's soul (life) belongs to Allah. It is just a trust given to man for a certain period of time. It is not meant to be harmed or destroyed in a frivolous way.23 The remaining rights are, the rights of other people on man, and the rights of other creatures.

### CONCLUSION:

This paper has attempted to explain to the world that the much-talked about human rights which have been declared by the UN are nothing new. In fact, these rights have been granted to humanity by Allah six centuries ago before the UN could dream of doing so. Besides, it is equally clear from what has been presented in this paper that the UN Charter on human rights is a woeful failure and full of hypocrisy. The Charter has succeeded in entrenching the rights and interests of powerful nations at the expense of weaker and defenceless nations because their rights and interests have been compromised

Or can anybody claim that Chechnya has any right to life, security of life, freedom, equality before the law, etc? Can anybody claim that Palestinians enjoy these human rights that we have enumerated the same way the Israelis enjoy them? Can anybody be deceived into

believing that the Muslim captives of Guantanamo Penitentiary have any status under the UN's human rights Charter? Can anybody be deceived into believing that the female Muslims who chose to be different from other women wherever they are by exercising their freedom to wear their hijab and niqab in France and other Western / European countries have any status under the ''glorified'' UDHR? Can anybody take the Charter serious or worthier than the papers upon which they have been written, taking into cognisance the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, just for the sake of capturing—dead or alive—Usamah bn Laden and Saddam Husain? Can anybody take the UDHR serious, in view of the illegal overthrow of the legitimate governments of Gaddafi of Libya and Morsi of Egypt respectively?

We therefore call on Muslim countries in general and Muslim leaders in particular, to come back to their senses and re-establish their link with their Religion, their Book, and their Lord. Nothing is wanting in your Religion and your Book, and your Lord has given you everything that you need .

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