

Why Allah guides some and not others

Why do so many people find peace in Islam and why do some Muslims become atheist?

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ فَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

We have not sent any Rasool [Messenger] except that he spoke the language of his own people, so that he could explain to them clearly. Then Allah Guides whom He wills, and let go stray whom He wills: He is the Mighty, the Wise.[Q4/14]

Based on this Quranic Aya, question arises if Allah Guides whom He wills and let go stray whom He wills then a person cannot do anything as Allah has decided his fate about guidance and no matter how hard he tries he won't be guided.

It is a fact, we believe that, in the first and last analysis, guidance (or lack thereof) is something bestowed on individuals by Allah (SWT) Based on His Infinite Wisdom and Knowledge.

This might make some people quite worried. Why would they worry? They would worry out of a fear that these decisions are either random, or capricious.

However, the Quran goes to great lengths in numerous verses (way, way too numerous to enumerate here) to show that neither is the case. The message which we see very clearly from the Quran is that, just as there are physical laws that govern the universe, there are also moral laws that govern the universe. The former operate in the physical realm, the latter operate in the spiritual realm. We

will quote a very few verse snippets out of numerous verses in the Quran, which make the same points over and over.

Just as in the physical realm, where to every action, there is a reaction (one of Newton's laws), we believe that in the spiritual realm, for every action there is a reaction.

Looking at the verse of the Quran mentioned above, interestingly from Arabic linguistic point of view it admits both translations – that Allah guides whom He wills, or that Allah guides he who wills (to be guided). In this, that there is a very strong statement of the moral law which governs the universe. We believe (and Allah knows the best) that faith is a gift bestowed by Allah upon those who seek it. If one leans toward Allah, Allah will lean toward them, and bestow upon them faith.

This can be seen in the following verse snippet:

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَن يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَن أُنَابَ

-----“Indeed, Allah leaves to stray whoever He wills, and guides to Himself whoever turns to Him” (Quran 13:27).

Conversely, Allah allows those to go astray who specifically choose that path - this is the reaction to their action in the moral scheme of the universe. Therefore, as we look at various verse snippets, we see that when Allah says that He will not guide someone, it is always because that person has specifically chosen misguidance:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي أَن يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَّا بَعُوضَةً فَمَا فَوْقَهَا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ

-----“Through this test, He leaves many to stray, and guides many. And He leaves none to stray except the rebellious” (Quran 2:26)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَبْطُلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ
وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ
صَلْدًا لَا يَفْقِدُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

. O you who believe! Do not nullify your charitable deeds with reminders and hurtful words, like him who spends his wealth to be seen by the people, and does not believe in Allah and the Last Day. His likeness is that of a smooth rock covered with soil: a downpour strikes it, and leaves it bare—they gain nothing from their efforts. Allah does not guide the disbelieving people.[Q2/264]

وَمِنَ الْإِبْلِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ اثْنَيْنِ قُلْ آلذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمِ الْإُنثَيْنِ أَمْ اشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ
أَرْحَامُ الْإُنثَيْنِ أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ وَصَّاكُمُ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا
لِيُضِلَّ النَّاسَ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

----- Who can be for unjust than the one who forges a lie against Allah, so that they may mislead mankind without having knowledge? Surely Allah does not guide the unjust people.[Q6/144]

The person's action comes first, through an attitude of rebelliousness, or deliberate unbelief, or wicked behavior, and they squander their opportunity for guidance.

Therefore, the first point, to be succinct, is that when we say that Allah guides whom He wills and leaves go astray, whom He wills, those decisions are neither random nor capricious. They are governed by a moral law which the Quran makes very, very clear. It is then the human's choice how to position himself vis a vis that law.

The second point is that when the gift of faith is bestowed, it is not a simple, fixed lump sum, such as giving someone a gift of \$1 million and then that's it -- there you have it. Rather, it is like getting the gift of a fresh sapling tree, which, if nurtured, sends strong roots into the ground, and grows into the sky, and bears beautiful fruit. Those who nurture the initial gift of faith will find their faith increased, and in that, they will find the serenity and peace that you asked about. We can see that in the following verses:

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ نَبَأَهُم بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّهُمْ فِتْيَةٌ آمَنُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَزِدْنَاَهُمْ هُدًى

“[And now] We shall truly relate to thee their story: Behold, they were young men who had attained to faith in their Sustainer: and [so] We deepened their consciousness of the right way” (Quran 18:13)

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَ لِلَّهِ جُنُودُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

“It is He who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers that they would add faith to their faith. To Allah belong the forces of the heavens and earth. Allah is All-Knowing and All-Wise” (Quran 48:4)

Thus, faith is not static. If cared for, it will increase, and hopefully lead to tranquility and inner peace.

Those, conversely, who take the gift of faith and deliberately squander it, they let that sapling die, and can then end up disbelieving in Allah, also, as the Quran mention:

كَيْفَ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ قَوْمًا كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَشَهِدُوا أَنَّ الرَّسُولَ حَقٌّ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

“How would Allah bestow His guidance upon people who have resolved to deny the truth after having attained to faith, and having borne witness that this Apostle is true, and [after] all evidence of the truth has come unto them? For, Allah does not guide such evildoing folk” (Quran 3:86)

In this verse, it is made clear that Allah will not guide those who deliberately squander the gift of faith after it has been given.

Remember Guidance to humans is sole prerogative of Allah (SWT), Not even His prophets can guide people, they just inform the truth to them, inspire them with their conduct and warn them of the consequences of not obeying and believing in Allah. Allah is the only one who knows what’s inside the heart of the people. Are they really wants guidance?

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

(O Prophet), you cannot grant guidance to whom you please. It is Allah Who guides those Whom He wills.⁷⁹ He knows best who are amenable to guidance.

The context shows that the object of addressing this sentence to the Prophet (peace be upon him), after mentioning the affirmation of the faith by this Christians from Habash, was to put the disbelievers of Makkah to shame, as if to say. "O unfortunate people, what wretches you are! People from far off places are coming to benefit from the fountainhead of blessings that has been made available in your own city, but you are willfully depriving yourselves of it." But the same thing has been said like this: "O Muhammad, you wish that your clansmen and your kinsfolk; and your near and dear ones should benefit from this life-giving nectar, but yours willing alone cannot avail. To give guidance is in the power of Allah: He favors with it only those whom He finds inclined to accept guidance. If your kinsfolk lack this inclination, how can they be favored with this blessing?"

According to Bukhari and Muslim, this verse was sent down with regard to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) uncle, Abu Talib. When he was about to breathe his last, the Prophet (peace be upon him) tried his utmost that he should affirm faith in La ilaha illallah, so that he might die as a Muslim, but he preferred to die on the creed of Abdul Muttalib; that is why Allah said: "You cannot give guidance to whom you please.". This only shows that the truth of its meaning became most evident only on that occasion. Though the Prophet (peace be upon him) sincerely wished that every man should be blessed with guidance, the person whose dying on disbelief could cause him the greatest anguish and of whose guidance he was most desirous on account of personal bonds of love and affection, was Abu Talib. But when he was helpless in affording guidance even to him, it became evident that it did not lie in the power of the Prophet to give guidance to one or withhold it from another, but it lay wholly in the power of Allah. And Allah bestows this favor on whomever He wills not on account of a family or tribal relationship, but on the basis of one's sincerity, capability and inclination of the heart.

Also remember Allah (SWT) had accepted Prophet (SAW) wish that Either Umer Bin Khatab accepts Islam or Abu Jahl, But Allah Choose Umer, because Allah

knows who sincerely wants to be guided as Prophet do not know what's in people's heart unless Allah inspires them with "Wahi" revelation. Similarly Prophet Noah wanted his son to be guided before his death at the time of Great flood, but Allah (SWT) refused his request as his son had no desired to be guided.

Bottom Line is Allah guides those people who sincerely want to be guided and there is no guidance for

- 1) Who associates partners with Allah, Disbeliever to Him
- 2) Who are ungrateful to Allah.
- 3) Who are selfish and arrogant.
- 4) Transgressors.
- 5) Involves in Riya (Showing off)
- 6) Tells lie against Allah.
- 7) Commit injustices.
- 8) Hypocrites (Munafiq)

Of course if someone forgives above things sincerely and asks Allah for repentance/forgiveness then Allah's door of Guidance and Mercy is always open