



Laws [Sunan] Oriented Approach to Reading Children of Israel Experience in the Qur'an

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The Children of Israel occupy a central and recurring place in the Qur'an. Their presence is so extensive that it cannot be understood merely as a historical account or narrative reference. Rather, it points to broader Sunnah-based patterns governing the relationship between revelation and society, as well as between the prophetic message and the history. The Qur'an invokes the experience of the Children of Israel as a human case, through which key moral and historical dynamics can be explored, such as the principles of divine selection, the conditions that lead to deviation, the processes of moral and social decline, and the laws of replacement. Accordingly, the study of the Children of Israel moves beyond the limits of religious or political polemics and becomes an entry point to understand the historical trajectories of societies. It highlights how revealed messages may operate as sources of ethical and civilizational renewal, or conversely, how they may be reduced to instruments of justification when their moral foundations are lost.

First: Introduction to Issue of Children of Israel Centrality in the Qur'anic Discourse

It becomes clear to the reader that the Qur'an dedicates a significant portion to discussing the Children of Israel, both in terms of quantity and distribution across Meccan and Medinan verses, revealing an intentional pedagogical and civilizational aim. Their mention recurs in various contexts: reminding them

of blessings, warning them against deviation, explaining the laws of rise and fall, and highlighting the encounter with prophecy. This diversity indicates that the Qur'an aims to build a prophetic awareness that uses the experience of the Children of Israel as a model for understanding the relationship between humanity and revelation.

The Qur'an opens its discourse with the Children of Israel by reminding them of the blessings and responsibility bestowed upon them, as in the verse: {O Children of Israel, remember My favor that I have bestowed upon you and that I preferred you over the worlds} [Al-Baqarah, verse: 47]. This preference is not presented as a personal privilege, but rather as a historical duty, because the Qur'anic context itself ties it to the covenant and pact. Hence, this preference is conditional upon loyalty. Thus, the Qur'an repeatedly links blessings with the covenant: {And fulfill My covenant, and I will fulfill your covenant} [Al-Baqarah, verse: 40], establishing the idea that divine selection is a dynamic relationship between Allah and humanity.

This approach reveals that the Qur'an redefines religious identity on an ethical basis, rather than on a national or historical one. Thus, the same discourse is directed toward the Muslim ummah to warn them of the same deviation, as in the verse: {Do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part?} [Al-Baqarah, verse: 85]. Though this verse appears in the context of the Children of Israel, it carries a general warning, for the Qur'an shows that religious division is a recurring pattern when a message becomes a closed identity.

This centrality is also evident in the Qur'an's analysis of the psychological and social structure that led to deviation. It points out internal maladies such as hardness of heart, rebellion, and attachment to outward appearances, as in the verse: {Then your hearts became hard after that, and they became like stones or even harder} [Al-Baqarah, verse: 74]. This psychological analysis reveals that the issue lies in a deep internal disorder in the structure of awareness.

Notably, the Qur'an portrays the experience of the Children of Israel as a continual struggle between prophecy and religious institutions. The prophets in this experience, besides being spiritual leaders, were also reformers who faced societal and vested interests, as in the verse: {Whenever a messenger came to them with what their souls did not desire, a group they denied, and a group they killed} [Al-Ma'idah, verse: 70]. This reveals that deviation begins when the message is transformed into a tool to serve personal interests, and revelation

becomes a threat rather than a reference point.

This aspect makes the issue of the Children of Israel central to the Qur'anic construction of awareness, as the Qur'an presents through it general historical laws. The experience reveals that nations may reach the height of proximity to revelation and then deviate when they lose their ethical sense. The Qur'an directs the Muslim nation [ummah] to read this experience as a mirror, as in the verse: {So take a lesson, O people of insight} [Al-Hashr, verse: 2].

Thus, the presence of the Children of Israel in the Qur'an is a civilizational issue related to understanding the laws that govern the rise and fall of nations. This makes the study of their experience in the Qur'anic context essential for understanding contemporary challenges, for the Qur'an does not present a closed history but rather open laws. Every nation may follow the path of selection or the path of replacement, depending on its position in relation to justice, ethics, and fulfillment of the covenant.

Second: Divine Selection in the Qur'anic Perspective

The concept of selection in the Qur'an represents one of the key elements to understand the experience of the Children of Israel. This concept forms the foundation of their relationship with revelation, and it determines the position of any nation within the course of the message. The Qur'an does not present selection as a self-granted privilege or racial superiority, but rather re-establishes it upon an ethical and mission-based foundation, making it a historical responsibility rather than a fixed state or closed identity. Thus, understanding divine selection becomes a condition for understanding the transformation that led to replacement, and serves as an entry point to liberating religious awareness from the ethnic or national tendencies that have historically infiltrated religion.

The Qur'an acknowledges the selection of the Children of Israel, as in the verse: {And We certainly chose them, knowing them, above the worlds} [Al-Dukhan, verse: 32]. However, this selection comes in the context of both explanation and warning. The verse itself points out that this selection is based on divine knowledge, an understanding of their role within the context of the message, not on any inherent, independent merit. Thus, divine selection becomes part of the trial [fitnah], because in the Qur'an, the selection is always linked with testing, as in the verse: {And We test you with evil and good as a trial} [Al-Anbiya, verse: 35]. The selection, then, places a nation in a position of testing, not of safety.

The Qur'an reveals that the essence of divine selection is a mission-based function; it is associated with carrying revelation, establishing justice, and being a witness to humanity. Therefore, we find that the Qur'anic discourse links blessings

with responsibility, as in the verse: {O Children of Israel, remember My favor that I have bestowed upon you} [Al-Baqarah, verse: 122], immediately following it with a reminder of the covenant. The matter is one of contractual relation based on fulfillment. This connection between selection and covenant reflects a Qur'anic vision that sees religion as a historical ethical project, not merely a hereditary belonging.

What stands out is that the Qur'an redirects the concept of selection towards piety and action, shifting its focus from identity to ethics, as in the verse: {Indeed, the most honorable of you with Allah is the most righteous of you} [Al-Hujurat, verse: 13]. This verse represents a radical re-foundation of the idea, as it opens dignity to all individuals and breaks the historical monopoly of the idea of the «chosen people.» Thus, the selection transforms from a privilege into a path, from an identity into a movement, and from inheritance into responsibility.

The Qur'anic analysis reveals that the greatest danger is not the selection itself, but rather its transformation into a closed awareness. When selection turns into a sense of immunity, deviation begins because individuals stop holding themselves accountable. The Qur'an criticizes this transformation explicitly, as in the verse: {And they said the Fire will not touch us except for a few days} [Al-Baqarah, verse: 80]. This belief reflects the shift of selection from a responsibility to a guarantee, from an obligation to a sense of preordained salvation. Here, the Qur'an uncovers that deviation begins when the ethical law is replaced by psychological certainty.

The Qur'an also demonstrates that selection does not negate accountability; rather, it increases it, because closeness to revelation amplifies responsibility. Thus, despite their proximity to prophecy, the Children of Israel were harshly criticized because they knew the truth more than others did. The Qur'an establishes a general principle that knowledge opens the door to greater deviation if it is disconnected from action. This is why the Qur'an's discourse is so severe in the verse: {It is greatly hated by Allah that you say what you do not do} [Al-Saff, verse: 3]. This statement goes beyond its specific context to establish a general standard for evaluating nations.

This understanding redirects attention to the relationship between religion and history. The divine selection in the Qur'an is a movement of rise and fall because the message is an open project. Therefore, there is no fixed concept of the «chosen people» in the Qur'an, but rather the concept of the «witnessing nation,» as in the verse: {And thus We have made you a just nation that you will be witnesses over the people} [Al-Baqarah, verse: 143]. Here, the role of witness is tied to justice and truth.

Thus, it becomes clear that the Qur'anic concept of the selection goes beyond the

national dimension to a global human horizon. The Qur'an shifts the center of the message from a closed community to an open humanity, and from a specific history to general laws. This makes the experience of the Children of Israel persistently relevant, as every nation may transform from a message into an institution, from a movement into stagnation, and from justice into arrogance.

To reread divine selection from this perspective would liberate religious thought from the political manipulation of history and prevent religion from becoming a tool for domination. It would also open a critical horizon that places the Muslim nation [ummah] itself as a subject of accountability, because the selection cannot be considered a guarantee for survival but a condition for continuing in justice. Hence, the Qur'anic question is always: how do we maintain the meaning of the selection without turning it into a justificatory discourse?

This question serves as the entry point to understanding the law of replacement, because the Qur'an establishes a dialectical relationship between the selection and the replacement. When a nation loses its prophetic mission, the historical transition to another nation begins.

Third: From Missionary Shift to Identity-Centeredness

The Qur'anic reading of the experience of the Children of Israel reveals that deviation did not occur suddenly; rather, it emerged through a cumulative process in which religion shifted from an open missionary function to a closed identity that centers around the self. This transformation is one of the key aspects in understanding the relationship between the selection and the replacement, because when the mission loses its human and moral dimension, it turns into a tool for protecting privileges, rather than serving justice. Therefore, the Qur'an analyzes this structural shift, which moves the community from the position of witness to the position of isolation.

The mission, in its essence, is a movement toward the world; it carries a message addressed to humans as humans. Thus, we find that the prophets in the Israeli experience sought to renew the covenant and restore the community to the spirit of the mission. However, the shift began when religious affiliation became a substitute for moral action, with identity taking precedence over values. The religion thus became a framework for protection rather than a standard for accountability. The Qur'an refers to this path when it shows how the covenant turned into a mere slogan, as in His saying: {And they said, 'Our hearts are wrapped.} [Al-Baqarah, verse: 88]. This phrase expresses a state of cognitive and spiritual closure, where certainty becomes a barrier preventing reform.

This identity-centeredness also appears in the transformation of scripture into a tool of justification. The Qur'an mentions the phenomenon of distorting meaning and altering purposes, as in the verse: {They distort the words from their places} [Al-Nisa, verse: 46]. Here, distortion is understood as redirecting religion to serve interests. This reveals that the real danger in religious history lies in reinterpreting it to serve power or the group.

The Qur'an also shows that this transformation is linked to the social and economic structure, where layers emerge that benefit from stagnation and resist renewal. Therefore, the prophets faced deeply rooted religious and social institutions, as in the verse: {We will never believe you until we see Allah openly.} [Al-Baqarah, verse: 55]. These demands expressed a rejection of change. The continuous demand for miracles represents a mechanism for postponing commitment, a recurring phenomenon in every religious history when religion turns into a system of customs.

Another manifestation of this identity-centeredness is the emergence of a sense of collective immunity, where identity becomes a substitute for piety. The Qur'an clearly conveys this sense in Allah, Almighty, saying: {We are the sons of Allah and His beloved ones} [Al-Ma'idah, verse: 18]. This concept expresses a transition from a covenantal relationship to a relationship of privilege, from responsibility to exemption.

The Qur'an also reveals that this transformation led to isolating the mission from its universal dimension, because a community centered on itself loses the ability to bear witness. Therefore, the Qur'an links isolation with oppression, as in His saying: {So, because of their breaking of the covenant, We cursed them and made their hearts hard} [Al-Ma'idah, verse: 13]. The hardness of the heart is a civilizational structure that reflects the loss of moral sensitivity.

It is striking that the Qur'an does not present this phenomenon as an Israeli peculiarity, but as a general law. Any group carrying a mission can undergo this path: it begins with a human function, then closes off, and ultimately transforms into an institution that protects its interests. From here, the Qur'anic discourse is directed at the Muslim nation itself because the danger of identity-centeredness exists at all times. The Qur'an warns against this path by constantly reminding that religion is a continuous movement.

This analysis reveals that deviation begins with calcification. When the mission transforms into a closed social system, reform becomes a threat. Therefore, the resistance of the prophets in history was part of a deeper struggle between spirit and institution, revelation and interest, justice and privilege. This is what makes the experience of the Children of Israel a mirror for understanding the crises of the

contemporary religious world, where the phenomenon recurs in different forms.

The rereading of this transformation opens a critical horizon that goes beyond traditional religious debate because the issue is not about a particular religion or a specific group, but about the structure of deviation itself. Any society can reduce religion to identity, and any group can make privilege a substitute for responsibility. Hence, the Qur'anic question always remains: How do we maintain the vitality of the mission without it turning into a tool of dominance or isolation?

This question leads to the concept of replacement, because identity-centeredness is the beginning of losing the civilizational role. When a nation loses its ability to bear witness, the movement of history begins to shift elsewhere.

Fourth: The Sunnah of Replacement

If the concept of selection in the Qur'an is a conditional missionary function, and identity-centeredness is the beginning of deviation, then the Sunnah of replacement represents the other side of this path. It reveals that, in the Qur'anic perspective, history follows fixed moral laws. The Qur'an presents replacement as a civilizational law that redistributes roles when nations lose the conditions for the mission. Therefore, understanding replacement becomes essential for understanding the movement of history, as it links values and effectiveness, and ethics and destiny.

The replacement in the Qur'anic discourse is not limited to the Children of Israel alone; rather, it is part of a broader general system that includes all nations. The Qur'an clearly affirms this law in Allah, Almighty, saying: {If you turn away, He will replace you with another people, and they will not be like you} [Muhammad, verse: 38]. This verse indicates that replacement is not a judgment on a specific nation, but rather a constant warning. The message here frees the consciousness from the illusion of immunity because the mission does not guarantee permanence but places the nation under continuous testing.

The Qur'an reveals that the replacement is a cumulative process that begins with moral corruption and then transforms into civilizational incapacity. Hence, the Qur'an links oppression with downfall, as in the verse: {How many a city We have destroyed while it was wrongdoer} [Al-Hajj, verse: 45]. The oppression here is a civilizational structure that reflects an imbalance within.

It is noteworthy that the Qur'an presents destruction as the result of a long process of accumulation. The Qur'anic history shows that nations undergo a stage of seduction, where they possess the means of power despite their deviation, as in His saying: {We will gradually lead them to destruction from where they do not know} [Al-A'raf, verse: 182]. This law shows that apparent prosperity can be a precursor to

downfall. Here, the Qur'an frees consciousness from a superficial reading of history that equates success solely with power.

The Qur'an also points out that the replacement is linked to the loss of the ability to renew. The nation that becomes stagnant loses its position in the movement of the mission. Therefore, we find that many stories of the prophets end with the leadership transitioning to other groups more willing to establish justice, as in the case of the Children of Israel themselves, who gradually lost their missionary role. The Qur'an portrays this transformation as a shift in function, not just a punishment, because the mission does not stop with any particular group.

Hence, we see that replacement has a positive dimension because it opens the space for new forces to carry values. The Qur'an presents history as a continuous movement of renewal. Thus, the Qur'anic discourse talks about "reviving the earth after its death," as in the verse: {And He gives life to the earth after its death} [Al-Rum, verse: 19]. This expression has a civilizational dimension, indicating that societies go through cycles of revival and decline.

This understanding makes replacement an open horizon. A fallen nation can return when it regains its values, just as a rising nation can deviate. Hence, history in the Qur'an becomes a field of continuous responsibility because the civilizational position is the result of ongoing effort. This is why the Qur'an links internal change with external destiny, as in His saying: {Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is within themselves} [Al-Ra'd, verse: 11].

This law reveals that replacement begins from within because civilizational collapse is a reflection of a moral crisis. When a nation loses its sense of justice, and the mission becomes a tool for power or identity, the movement of history begins to shift to another. Therefore, replacement is the result of deep psychological and cultural transformations.

The recalling of the law [Sunnah] of the replacement in contemporary consciousness frees Islamic thought from the defensive binary that links defeat solely to conspiracy. The Qur'an does not deny the existence of conflict, but it links the outcomes to the internal structure of nations. Hence, the real question is not just about the strength of the enemy, but also about the nation's position on values. This awareness redirects the civilizational discussion toward moral and intellectual reform, instead of focusing on reactions.

Thus, this law, in this sense, forms a central axis for understanding the present, as it reminds us that history is not closed, and that the moral leadership of humanity is not exclusive to any one group. This prepares the ground to discuss how religious narratives are employed in contemporary civilizational conflict, and how the

selection idea has been turned into a political tool in the Zionist project and modern Western discourse.

Fifth: Children of Israel in Contemporary Civilizational Debate

While the Qur'an presented the experience of the Children of Israel within a framework of divine laws aimed at shaping historical and moral awareness, this experience has evolved into a central theme in the contemporary global civilizational debate. The concept of selection has been reinterpreted in political and cultural contexts, becoming a key element in constructing narratives of dominance and justifying power projects. Hence, there is a need for a contemporary Qur'anic reading that distinguishes between the divine text and its historical use, as confusion between the two has led to significant misunderstandings of the relationship between religion and politics in the modern world.

The modern Zionist project has heavily relied on reinterpreting biblical theology in a political framework. The idea of the "chosen people" is presented as a fixed historical right, which represents a reversal of the Qur'anic concept of selection. In the Qur'an, the selection is linked to covenant and action, as stated in the verse: {My covenant does not include the wrongdoers} [Al-Baqarah, verse: 124]. This establishes a general principle that denies any permanent privilege when justice is absent. Thus, any project that justifies control or exclusion in the name of religion contradicts the very logic of revelation itself.

Some Western religious movements, especially within Protestant theology, contributed to reproducing this concept, seeing the establishment of the "State of Israel" as the fulfillment of religious prophecies. This convergence of theology and politics turned religious history into a tool in the geopolitical struggle. This shift reveals that when religion is divorced from ethics, it becomes a force for mobilization, rather than a source of guidance. The Qur'an warns against this path, highlighting the danger of using religion to serve personal interests, as stated: {Do not exchange My signs for a small price} [Al-Baqarah, verse: 41].

Modern Western discourse also redefined the selection concept within a broader cultural framework, where theories of civilizational superiority emerged, viewing the West as the heir to this historical privilege. The idea of "exceptionalism" extended beyond the religious domain into political and cultural realms, as seen in global hegemony theories. Here, the selection becomes a symbol of sovereignty. Interestingly, this shift reproduces the very structure the Qur'an criticized, as privilege becomes a justification for domination.

This contemporary utilization compels Qur'anic studies to go beyond traditional

doctrinal debates and engage in deconstructing modern narratives. The Qur'an addresses the issue of the Children of Israel as a model for understanding the relationship between message and power. Therefore, contemporary Qur'anic readings should reveal how religious concepts transform into tools for building the international order.

On the other hand, contemporary Islamic discourse has sometimes fallen into an emotional reaction, treating the issue with an absolute rejection or historical simplification, without recognizing the deeper divine laws presented by the Qur'an. This approach reduces the issue to a political struggle, while the Qur'an addresses it within a broader civilizational horizon. Thus, revisiting the experience of the Children of Israel allows Islamic thought to transcend the narrow dichotomy of defense and attack, establishing a deeper critical awareness.

Furthermore, the Qur'an offers a universal moral framework that can contribute to deconstructing racial and religious tendencies in the modern world. The Qur'anic discourse affirms the unity of the human origin, as stated: {O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female} [Al-Hujurat, verse: 13], placing the criterion of distinction in piety and good deeds, not in race or affiliation. This dimension allows Qur'anic studies to contribute to civilizational dialogue, instead of being confined to a polemical discourse.

The presence of the Children of Israel in contemporary debate cannot be understood without linking it to the "wars of narratives" that shape one of the key points of global conflict today. The narrative presenting the Zionist project as a historical return and the narrative justifying domination in the name of values both require intellectual and ethical deconstruction. The Qur'an provides the tools for this deconstruction, as it reveals that history does not belong to one nation or civilization, but rather remains an open field for the movement of values.

This realization makes Qur'anic studies a key player in the present. The issue is not merely defending identity, but building a global discourse that re-centers justice. Thus, discussing the Children of Israel in the modern era becomes part of a broader project to liberate consciousness from closed narratives and redirect the discussion toward the universal values established by the Qur'an.

Sixth: From History to Divine Laws [Sunan]

The choice to focus on the theme of the Children of Israel between selection and the replacement is not only based on historical or polemical interest, but also stems from a pressing epistemological and civilizational need in the current moment. The world today is undergoing profound shifts in power dynamics, and there is an

intensified struggle over narratives and meanings, to the point that history itself has become a battleground. In this context, there is a need to revive the Qur'anic methodology in reading nations, as it provides a framework that transcends the political moment to understanding the laws that govern the movement of societies.

The Holy Qur'an addresses the experience of the Children of Israel as an open horizon for understanding, as stated: {Indeed, in their stories, there is a lesson for those of understanding} [Yusuf, verse: 111]. The lesson here is a recognition of divine laws, which reveals that history holds recurring patterns in different forms. Therefore, revisiting this experience in the contemporary moment means re-establishing a civilizational awareness that links the text to reality.

The Qur'anic liberating reading does not imply a separation from the text, but rather a restoration of its critical energy. The Qur'an, in its essence, is a book of liberation for humanity from all forms of enslavement, whether political, intellectual, or spiritual. Thus, divine messages have always been linked to freeing humanity from oppression, as in Allah, Almighty, saying: {And We certainly sent Moses with Our signs, saying bring your people from the darkness into the light} [Ibrahim, verse: 5]. This transition from darkness to light is a recurring civilizational law when the message is revived in human awareness.

Thus, revisiting the concepts of the selection and the replacement in light of the Qur'an opens the door for constructing a global consciousness that transcends national and ethnic boundaries. The Qur'an rejects the monopoly over values and establishes a universal human unity based on justice, as Allah, Almighty, says: {O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice} [Al-Ma'idah, verse: 8]. Here, the act of bearing witness is a global moral responsibility. Therefore, the nation that carries the Qur'an is called to be a model of justice, not merely a group seeking survival.

This liberating perspective compels Qur'anic studies to go beyond narrow specialization and open up to other fields of knowledge, for the Qur'an itself addresses humanity in all its dimensions. The question of the selection and the replacement is inseparable from issues such as politics, economics, identity, and memory. This aligns with the broader epistemological project that seeks to deconstruct dominant narratives and rebuild consciousness from within the Qur'anic text.

Moreover, this issue aims at contribute to building a global Qur'anic discourse capable of dialogue. The Qur'an establishes a culture of recognizing the other without compromising the truth. It affirms the principle of human diversity, as in the verse: {And if your Lord had willed, He would have made mankind one nation}

[Hud, verse: 118], but links this diversity to justice and piety. On the other hand, this issue seeks to cement the principle of divine laws in Islamic thinking. This principle enables the Muslim community to understand its position in the world with awareness and realism. The Qur'an links victory and empowerment to moral conditions, as in the verse: {Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession upon the earth} [Al-Nur, verse: 55]. This promise represents an open horizon that is realized when its conditions are met.

It is noteworthy that this issue was not planned in the context of the rapidly unfolding events in the region today, but its preparation had started some time ago as part of the magazine's academic program. However, its release coincided with a highly turbulent historical moment, particularly the Israeli-American aggression against Iran and Lebanon and Iraq, accompanied by widespread military, political, and media escalation. This timing has given the issue an additional dimension, making the questions raised by the research on the Children of Israel in the Qur'an more urgent and relevant, given the current conflict over religious and historical narratives. The convergence of academic research with this historical moment does not mean that the journal aims to read the immediate political event, but rather emphasizes that Qur'anic studies can provide a deeper perspective on understanding civilizational transformations and recalling the laws that govern the rise and fall of nations, beyond immediate reactions or ideological uses of the texts.

Finally, it is important to note that the research in this issue is as follows:

*In the studies of the «Focus»:

- »Divine Selection, Historical Deviation: Great Paradox in Children of Israel Experience».
- »Children of Israel Between Humiliation, Submission, Between Arrogance, Rebellion: Qur'anic Analysis of the Jewish Character».
- »Racial Superiority or Exceptionalism: How the Qur'an Refutes the Chosen People Concept».
- »Laws [Sunan] of Empowerment, Replacement: Qur'anic Logic in Dealing with Children of Israel».
- »Jewish Hostility Towards Islam, Muslims in the Qur'an: Roots, Outcomes.»
- In the «Qur'anic Studies and Research» section, a study focused on -»Figurative Meaning of «Hand» in the Noble Verse {Hand of Allah is above their hands}: Interpretive, Critical Analysis of Al-Zamakhshari's Perspective».
- In the end, there is the «Reviewing of book» section: «Jews, Zionism from the Holy Qur'an Perspective».

Thus, the hope is this issue will contribute to establish an aware Qur'anic reading that redirects the discussion towards values, liberates humanity from closed narratives, and establishes a civilizational consciousness that makes the Qur'an a source of guidance in a troubled world, in line with the verse: {Indeed, this Qur'an guides to that which is most suitable} [Al-Isra, verse: 9].

Allah is the One who grants success to the straight path.