

of the Hour as “mere” massed clouds in an attempt to reduce these phenomena to the manifest and “natural”—and thereby to explain them away—all of which is symptomatic of the belief of the Arabs of the Age of Ignorance, that all things possess natures of a fixity that cannot possibly admit of such unaccustomed changes (see Rāzī, *sub* Q 52:44).

Q 27:88 describes the extraordinary circumstances after the first sounding of the trumpet by the angel Isrāfīl (see ANGELS). At the moment of the trumpet blast, humankind *will see the mountains and think they are firmly fixed, but they will be passing by like clouds*: “[The mountains] will drift along as rain does when battered by the wind, until [the mountains] fall onto the ground, and thereby become flattened, as a prelude to the mountains becoming like carded wool (Q 101:5, also Q 70:9) and then *a dust, scattered* (Q 56:6)” (Jalālayn).

Most exegetes say mountains appearing as moving clouds in Q 27:88 (*And you will see the mountains and think they are firmly fixed, but they will be passing by like clouds; Allah’s handiwork Who perfects all things. He is aware of the things you do*) refers to circumstances of the End of the world. The description appears along with other signs of the Hour—the coming out of the Beast of the Earth (Q 27:82), the blowing of the Trumpet (Q 27:87), and the uprooting of the mountains which will be *passing by like clouds*. “Know that this is the third sign of the imminent coming of the Resurrection: the mountains being set in motion (Rāzī, *sub* Q 27:88).

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**See also:** ‘ĀD; ANGELS; APPORTIONMENT; BADR; CONTEMPLATION; CREATION; DAY OF JUDGMENT; EARTH; HYPOCRISY AND HYPOCRITES; RESURRECTION; SIGNS OF ALLAH.

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## COERCION

### IKRĀH

This article comprises the following sections: i. Definitions and Usage; ii. Glosses on Q 2:256: “*There is no coercion in religion*”; iii. Other Aspects of Coercion; iv. Coercion expressed by *idṭirār*; v. Bibliography.

### Definitions and Usage

Coercion (*ikrāh*) is defined as the act of forcing someone to do or accept something against his or her will (Ibn Manzūr, *sub* *k-r-h*). Ibn Fāris (d. 395/1004) notes that all derivatives of this root include something “contrary to satisfaction and love” (*khlāf al-riḍā wa-l-mahabb, Maqāyīs*). *Ikrāh* is “to compel another do something he despises” (Fayyūmī, *Miṣbāḥ*; Ibn Manzūr; Rāghib).

The related noun *karh* also indicates coercion. Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. al-Mufaḍḍal al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī (d. ca.502/1108) expands the conceptual range of the terms:

*Al-karh* is intense toil (*mashaqqa*) imposed by another which one bears against one’s will (*bi-ikrāh*), and *al-kurh* is a self-imposed undesirable [toil] and this is of two kinds: something naturally unpleasant and something disliked due to Intelligence or Sacred Law. Thus one can say for one and the same thing, ‘I like and despise it,’ that is, I like it naturally, but dislike it due to Intelligence and Sacred Law [and vice versa], as is said in Q 2:216, *Prescribed for you is fighting, though it be hateful to you*. That is, you dislike it naturally (*min ḥaythu-l-ṭaba‘*), but then this is clarified by His saying, *yet it may be that you hate a thing which is good for you; and it may be that you love a thing which is bad for you; Allah knows, and you know not*

(*Mufradāt, sub* *k-r-h*).

Forty-one derivatives of *k-r-h* appear in the Qur’an in eight forms. Derivatives relevant to this entry are: *ikrāh*—coercion, the verbal noun of the Form IV verb, used twice (Q 2:256; 24:33); and the nouns *kurh* (Q 2:216; 46:15x2) and *karh* (Q 3:83; 4:19; 9:53; 13:15;

41:11).

Two other kinds of compulsion are mentioned using the Form VIII verb *idṭarra* (“to compel, to force”) from the root *ḍ-r-r*; the root is used 74 times in 11 derived forms; Form VIII verb, which is relevant to this entry, occurs seven times (Q 2:126, 173; 5:3; 6:119, 145; 16:115; 31:24).

### ***There is no Coercion in Religion***

The pivotal verse (Q 2:256) states: *There is no compulsion in religion (fī-l-dīn). The right path (al-rushd) has become distinct from error (ghayy). And he who rejects false deities (tāghūt) and believes in Allah has grasped a firm handhold which will never break. Allah is Hearer, Knower.*

“The right path (*al-rushd*)” is glossed as Islam; *ghayy*, in contrast, is disbelief and falsehood. *Tāghūt* in this verse is a reference to the Devil and everything worshipped besides Allah (Bayḍāwī; Baghawī; Ibn al-Jawzī).

The verse has received exhaustive exegetical attention over the centuries with regard to its occasion of revelation, scope, and applicability—that is, whether it applies only to certain people in certain situations, is general or specific, and whether it was abrogated or not (see ABROGATION)—and the meaning of *fī-l-dīn*, mostly translated as “religion”. Its linguistic structure has been examined, and numerous exegetes, scholars of jurisprudence, and theologians have reflected on its meaning within the wider context of the message of the Qurʾān. A summary of these reflections and positions follows.

**Occasion of Revelation:** Exegetical discourse on the verse in most major works begins with an examination of the occasion of revelation. These sources identify two groups of people about whom the verse was revealed:

- **The children of Anṣār:** Abū-l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Aḥmad al-Wāḥidī al-Naysābūrī (d. 468/1075) relates a report from Ibn ‘Abbās (3BH-68/619-688) about a certain woman from the Anṣār who had vowed that if her child survived, she would raise the newborn as a Jew; other reports make a general reference to a pre-Islamic practice among certain Anṣār whose children died in infancy and their women would vow to raise a surviving child as a Jew and give the child to the Jews, because they considered the Jews superior to themselves in religious matters (*Asbāb, sub Q 2:256*). Other scholars specify that the Anṣār used to hire Jewish

women for breastfeeding (*q.v.*) and these children were raised as Jews. When Banū al-Naḍīr, the Jewish tribe of Madina (*q.v.*), was expelled for plotting against the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, the Anṣār asked the Prophet what to do with their children; they wanted to reclaim their children and force them to accept Islam. But Q 2:256 was revealed, and the adult children of Anṣār were given the choice to embrace Islam and stay, or to retain their adopted parents’ religion and leave Madina. A similar option was later given to the children of Anṣār who were suckled by the women of Banū Qurayza at the time of their expulsion from Madina (Wāḥidī, *Asbāb*; Ṭabarī; Qurṭubī; Rāzī; Ibn Kathīr; Māwardī; Ibn al-Jawzī; Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Aḥkām sub Q 2:256*; Naḥḥās, *al-Nāsikh 2:100*). In another report, al-Ṭabarī and al-Wāḥidī both mention a man named Abū-l-Ḥuṣayn, whose two young sons were converted to Christianity (*q.v.*) by certain visiting merchants from Syro-Palestine and when they left with them, he went to the Prophet, who said, “call them back,” but Q 2:256 was revealed and the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, did not recall them (Ṭabarī; Wāḥidī, *Asbāb, sub Q 2:256*).

- People of the Book (*q.v.*) from whom *jizya* (*q.v.*) is accepted, and unlike the polytheists, they are given the option of keeping their religion (Ṭabarī, Bayḍāwī, Sam‘ānī, Rāzī, Ibn Kathīr; Māturīdī, ; Ibn ‘Aṭīyya).

**The meaning of *dīn* (“religion”):** What does “*al-dīn* (the religion)” mean in *there is no compulsion in religion*? Abū Muḥammad Makkī b. Abī Ṭālib al-Qaysī (d. 437/1045) mentions two explanations for the definite article (“*al-*”) in *al-dīn*: (i) it refers back to the previous verse, which ends with the statement, *He is the Most High, the Great* (Q 2:255); thus, according to this explanation, the definite article (*al-*) is a substitute for the possessive pronoun (*‘iwaḍ min ḍamīr*), giving the meaning *His dīn*; (ii) the definite article is used to express identification and definition (*lām al-ta‘rīf*); thus *the religion*, in this context, means *al-Islām* (Makkī). Both grammatical explanations, however, yield the same understanding: *al-dīn* here means *al-Islām*. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) provides a similar breakdown of the possibilities. Majd al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Fayrūzābādī (729-817/1329-1414) offers another possibility: *al-dīn* in the verse may mean recompense (*al-jazā’*), referring to the recompense of the Creator; thus, the meaning would be: He cannot be forced to give reward, but He does