

Sura 109: Al-Kafirun (The Disbelievers)

In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy

Verses 1 to 6:

1. *Say, "Disbelievers; I do not worship what you worship,*
2. *Nor will you worship what I worship.*
3. *And I will never worship what you worship,*
4. *And you will never worship what I worship.*
5. *You have your religion*
6. *And I have my religion.*

The Arabs were not atheists. They simply did not understand that God, as He described Himself, is One and Unique. They associated partners with Him. They used to worship idols which symbolized righteous ancestors, great men of the past, or angels. They also claimed that the angels are the daughters of God. They thought that the idols could intercede on their behalf to God.

The Qur'an told us that they knew that God is the Creator of the heavens and earth. They believed that He controls the Sun, the Moon, and the rain. However, they still associated partners with Him.

They also believed that they were following the religion of Prophet Abraham (PBUH) and that they were better guided than the People of the Scripture who were living in the Arabian Peninsula.

When Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) told them that he was following the religion of Prophet Abraham (PBUH) they said, "We are following the religion of Abraham (PBUH), so why should we leave what we are following and follow Muhammad (PBUH)?" They tried also to negotiate with Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) a middle ground. They made him an offer that if he accepts their idols as gods, they would accept his God. They may have thought that they can convince the Prophet (PBUH) to meet them halfway.

This Sura came to declare unequivocally that there is no middle ground and that idolatry and Islam are completely two distinct religions, "*Say, 'Disbelievers; I do not worship what you worship, nor will you worship what I worship. And I will never worship what you worship, and you will never worship what I worship. You have your religion and I have my religion.'*" This is very clear and unequivocal statement. It starts with a firm command to the Prophet (PBUH), telling him to describe the idolaters of Mecca using their principal characteristic, "Disbelievers," so there would be no doubt that they were certainly disbelievers. This emphasized the distinct difference between the two groups, a difference that could not be bridged. The verses reiterated this fact in several ways to show that this difference could not be reconciled.