

to that which is definitive, and that which is unclear to that which is clear. In that way, one will find that some parts of the Book confirm others and there will be no contradiction or conflict in meaning. But people are divided into two groups:

﴿but those in whose hearts is deviation﴾ that is, an inclination away from righteousness because of corrupt motives; their aim is to follow misguidance. Their hearts have deviated from the path of guidance. ﴿follow the part thereof that is ambiguous﴾ that is, they forsake what is definitive and clear, and go to that which is ambiguous. Thus they approach the matter backwards, trying to interpret that which is definitive in the light of what they want to understand from the ambiguous verses, which results in confusion.

﴿seeking [to cause] confusion﴾ to those whom they call to follow them, because that which is ambiguous may be interpreted in such a way as to cause confusion due to its ambiguous nature. However, that which is clear and definitive cannot be a cause of confusion, because the true meaning is clear to anyone who seeks to follow the truth.

﴿and seeking an interpretation [that suits them]. But no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allah﴾. There are two opinions among the commentators as to whether the sentence ends with the word ﴿Allah﴾. The majority are of the view that it does end there; others are of the view that it continues, so that what is meant is, “But no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allah and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge.” Both meanings are possible. If interpretation is aimed at finding out the truth about the matter and its real nature, then the correct opinion is to stop at the phrase ﴿except Allah﴾, because Allah has kept knowledge of the true meaning of the ambiguous verses to Himself, as in the case of the exact nature of the attributes of Allah and how they are, and the exact nature of the events that will occur on the Last Day, and so on. These are matters the true nature of which is known only to Allah. It is not permissible to try to understand the nature of these things, because that is something that cannot be