

met that description ﴿in sacrifice, although they almost failed to do so﴾ because of their asking too many questions.

When they had slaughtered her, [Allah] said: ﴿Strike﴾ the slain man with part of her, either a specific part or any part of the cow's body. There is no benefit in specifying which part it was. So they struck him with part of the cow, and Allah brought him back to life and disclosed what they were concealing, as he identified his killer. His being brought back to life whilst they were watching was a sign that Allah can bring the dead back to life, ﴿that you may understand﴾ and be deterred from doing that which will cause you harm.

﴿Then after that, your hearts were hardened﴾ that is, they became harsh and rough, unable to benefit from any exhortation. ﴿Then after that﴾ means, after Allah bestowed upon you great blessings and showed you His signs, after which your hearts should not have become hard, because what you had seen should have softened your hearts and made them humble. Then Allah describes their hardheartedness as being ﴿like a rock﴾, which is harder than iron, because iron and lead melt when they are exposed to fire, but rocks do not melt.

﴿or even harder﴾ means, not less hard than rocks. Then Allah describes how rocks are better than their hearts, as He says: ﴿For among rocks there are some from which rivers spring forth; others which, when they cleave asunder, send forth water; and others which tumble down for fear of Allah﴾. In these ways rocks are superior to their hearts. Then He issues a sterner warning, and says: ﴿And Allah is not unaware of what you do﴾; rather He knows and keeps a record of all your deeds, great and small, and He will requite you for them in the fullest manner.

It should be noted that many of the commentators (may Allah have mercy on them) went to great lengths in filling their books with the stories taken from Jewish sources, and they tried to interpret the verses of the Qur'an in the light of these stories, making them like a