82613 - Explanation of the verse “Verily, I have wronged myself, and I submit [in Islam, together with Sulaymaan (Solomon)] to Allaah, the Lord of the ‘Aalameen(mankind, jinn and all that exists)”

the question

In the story of Sulaymaan and the Queen of Saba’ in Soorat al-Naml it says (interpretation of the meaning):
“She said: ‘My Lord! Verily, I have wronged myself, and I submit [in Islam, together with Sulaymaan (Solomon)] to Allaah, the Lord of the ‘Aalameen(mankind, jinn and all that exists).’”
[al-Naml 27:44]
I understand that the meaning is that she had wronged herself by disbelieving and that she submitted (became Muslim) after the truth became clear to her. But the wording of the verse, and the fact that there is no symbol for a pause or full stop after the word nafsi (myself) could make one imagine that the meaning is the opposite, that she wronged herself by submitting – Allaah forbid. Is there any explanation?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Allaah says in Soorat al-Naml (interpretation of the meaning):

“It was said to her: ‘Enter As-Sarh’ (a glass surface with water underneath it or a palace): but when she saw it, she thought it was a pool, and she (tucked up her clothes) uncovering her legs. Sulaymaan (Solomon) said: ‘Verily, it is a Sarh (a glass surface with water underneath it or a palace).’ She said: ‘My Lord! Verily, I have wronged myself, and I submit [in Islam, together with Sulaymaan (Solomon)] to Allaah, the Lord of the ‘Aalameen(mankind, jinn and all that exists)’”

[al-Naml 27:44]

In this verse Allaah tells us of the great surprise that Sulaymaan (peace be upon him) had

prepared for the Queen of Saba', which was a palace of glass, the floor of which was above the water, and the Queen stood astonished before these wonders, the like of which no human could produce, and she turned to Allaah and spoke to Him. She acknowledged that she had wronged herself by previously worshipping others, and she declared that she was submitting, with Sulaymaan, to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds.

This is what is understood from the context of the story and it is also what is implied by the rules of the Arabic language.

The phrase zalamtu nafsi (I have wronged myself) is a verbal clause which is the predicate of the word Inni (Verily, I).

This is followed by the conjunction wa (and) which connects one phrase to another, and she says, Wa aslamtu ma'a Sulaymaan (and I submit [in Islam, together with Sulaymaan (Solomon)]) .

See I'raab al-Qur'aan wa Bayaanuhu by Muhiy al-Deen Darweesh (7/216) and al-Jadwal fi I'raab al-Qur'aan by Mahmoud Saafi (9/415).

What is meant is: I submit with Sulaymaan to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds.

This is the correct meaning, because the grammarians say that the conjunction only limits repetition in a sentence.

Ibn 'Aqeel says in Sharh Alfiyat Ibn Maalik (2/208):

The conjunction implies repetition without needing to repeat everything. End quote.

So instead of saying ja'a Zayd wa ja'a 'Amr (Zayd came and 'Amr came) you can shorten it by saying: Ja'a Zayd wa 'Amr (Zayd and 'Amr came).

Similarly, sentence or phrases may be joined in like manner:

Instead of saying: Verily Allaah knows what you are doing and Allaah will bring you to account for it, you can shorten it and say: Allaah knows what you are doing and will bring you to account for

it.

The verse must be understood on this basis. So what the verse means is:

I have wronged myself, and I submit with Sulaymaan to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds.

From a linguistic point of view, it is not necessarily that the two sentences joined together have the meaning.

Professor ‘Abbaas Hasan says in al-Nahw al-Waafi (3/557):

If the word that comes after the conjunction wa is not singular, it may mean that both phrases refer to the same action, such as nabata al-ward wa nabata al-qasab (the flowers grew and the reeds grew), or it may not, such as hadarat al-tayyaarah wa lam tahdar al-sayyaarah (the plane came but the car did not come). End quote.

As Allaah mentioned the words of the Queen of Saba’ after the conjunction wa – “(and I submit [in Islam, together with Sulaymaan (Solomon)]” – it is not permissible to understand this as an elaboration of the words that came before the conjunction, from a purely linguistic point of view. How can that be so, when the two meanings are clearly opposites?

The context demonstrates that the queen acknowledged that she had wronged herself when she worshipped the sun instead of Allaah, and she repented from that shirk and submitted and worshipped Allaah alone, the Lord of the Worlds.

Thus the meaning is correct, and the misunderstanding of the verse asked about here is dispelled.

The misunderstanding – as far as grammatical rules are concerned – may have been valid if the wording had been:

“I have wronged myself: I submitted with Sulaymaan” with no conjunction, if the second phrase had been an apposition of the first phrase, as in the verse (interpretation of the meaning):

“and whoever does this shall receive the punishment.

69. The torment will be doubled to him on the Day of Resurrection, and he will abide therein in disgrace”

[al-Furqaan 25:68-69]

The doubling of the torment is an explanation of the punishment incurred by the one who commits major sin.

The misunderstanding – as far as grammatical rules are concerned – may also have been valid if the conjunction had been fa, and she had said “Inni zalamtu nafsi fa aslamtu ma’a Sulaymaan (Verily, I have wronged myself, and so I submit [in Islam, together with Sulaymaan (Solomon)])” because the conjunction fa is often used to indicate a sequence, i.e., it points to the reason, such as saying rama al-sayyaad al-taa’ir fa qatalahu (the hunter shot the bird and (so) he killed it).

See al-Nahw al-Waafi (3/574)

But the wording of the Qur’aan is quite clear:

“She said: ‘My Lord! Verily, I have wronged myself, and I submit [in Islam, together with Sulaymaan (Solomon)] to Allaah, the Lord of the ‘Aalameen(mankind, jinn and all that exists)’”

[al-Naml 27:44]

So the questioner’s confusion is not valid and does not affect the correct meaning and the principles of Arabic grammar.

And Allaah knows best.