

Allah SWT says in Surah Al Nahl Ayah 98:

98) فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

So when you recite the Qur'an, [first] seek refuge in Allah from Satan, the expelled [from His mercy].

126) وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوقِبْتُمْ بِهِ وَلَئِنْ صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِلصَّابِرِينَ

And if you punish [an enemy, O believers], punish with an equivalent of that with which you were harmed. But if you are patient - it is better for those who are patient.

The question is about (إِذَا و إِنْ) at the beginning of each of the two ayahs. What does إِذَا mean and what does إِنْ mean?

If you swap the two in the two ayahs, what happens to the meaning of the two ayahs? Also explain the rule as to when إِذَا is used and when إِنْ is used.

AssalamuAlaikum,

Masha'Allah perfect answers to the grammar question from everyone.

Allah SWT says in Surah Al Nahl Ayah 98

98) إِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

So when you recite the Qur'an, [first] seek refuge in Allah from Satan, the expelled [from His mercy].

Also Allah SWT says in the same Surah Ayah 126

126) وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوقِبْتُمْ بِهِ وَلَئِنْ صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِلصَّابِرِينَ

And if you punish [an enemy, O believers], punish with an equivalent of that with which you were harmed. But if you are patient - it is better for those who are patient.

Both إِذَا and إِنْ serve the purpose of conditional statements, with a significant difference. إِذَا is a conditional noun that means the condition being presented is firm and will happen, there is no option. For example (إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَ الْفَتْحِ) meaning that the victory of Allah was coming (فتح مكة), also serve the purpose of a rule, or a base. It will happen, no doubt about it. إِنْ on the other hand is a conditional particle and serves the purpose of the condition may or may not happen.

Referring to the ayat above. In the first Ayah, Allah SWT is talking to the prophet PBUH and that all also applies to us. Allah SWT knows that prophet will read the Quran and also we will too, hence the conditional noun إِذَا is used. It also tells us that reading the Quran is not an option, we must do it. In the second ayah, it is talking about punishing the same way you have been treated, but if you are patient, it would be better for those who are patient, hence the conditional particle إِنْ is used. Because the ayah says you might not punish and instead forgive. So, it would not be appropriate to use إِذَا in this context.

If you swap the two conditional noun and particle, the meaning would not fit the intended conditions and would be an error.

Notice the strength of the Arabic language and its accuracy in utilizing small words and how they can impact a significant change in the meaning if not used appropriately.