21654 - What is the Covenant in the aayah “Those who break Allaah’s Covenant after ratifying it…”?

the question

What is the Covenant in the aayah “Those who break Allaah’s Covenant after ratifying it…” [al-Baqarah 2:27 – interpretation of the meaning]?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Abu Bakr ibn al-‘Arabi said:

Covenants are of two types: one for which expiation may be offered and another for which there is no expiation. That for which expiation may be offered is that which is intended as a vow to refrain from doing something or to do something.

The second type is a covenant in which the two parties are bound in a manner that is permissible according to sharee’ah, and is binding, either exclusively between them or amongst many people. It is not permissible to nullify or abolish such a covenant, and it is not subject to kafaarah (expiation). This is the covenant for which the one who breaks it will be gathered (on the Day of Resurrection) as a betrayer, and a banner will be set up for him commensurate with the degree of his betrayal, and it will be said, “This is the betrayer of So and so.” Maalik says, a covenant sworn by oath is not permitted to be nullified, and this is what is meant by the aayah (interpretation of the meaning):

“and break not the oaths after you have confirmed them — and indeed you have appointed Allaah your surety” [al-Nahl 16:91]

And this is a matter concerning which there is no scholarly dispute.